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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A STUDY OF ADOLESCENT RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES

by

© MARY FRANCES COADY

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Study of Adolescent Religious Tendencies" submitted by Mary Frances Coady in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine religious experience, attitude and behaviour during the adolescent stage of development. The nature of religion, religious experience and religious attitude was explored; a study was made of the adolescent period, both in itself and within the context of the total life of man; and a theory of adolescent religiosity was posited. This theory was illustrated by an analysis of three adolescent characters from fiction.

Among the proposals made were the following:

(1) Man's deepest need is to achieve union, the culmination and perfection of which exists in union with the Sacred. The essence of union is love, which denotes an active concern for the beloved. Because adolescence is a period of egocentrism and struggle for identity, love tends to lie dormant at this time. Union is sought through means of escape. Therefore, an adolescent relationship with the Sacred is established through these same means, with strongly egocentric characteristics.

(2) Because of the powerful drive of sexuality during adolescence, it is highly likely that the adolescent's religiosity, or relationship with the Sacred, tends to be partly sexual in nature.

(3) Adolescents have a capacity for religious experience which is characteristically immature but nonetheless real and authentic.

(4) Most adolescents tend to form religious attitudes similar to the religious attitudes of people with whom they identify.

(5) The sense of alienation among contemporary adolescents appears to be a significant factor in their religiosity. Alienation in itself is not religious, but can be one means toward authentic religious experience.

These characteristics were illustrated by an analysis of the following adolescent characters from fiction: Alyosha from The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Franny from Franny and Zooey by J. D. Salinger, and Holden from The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger.

The adolescent has a capacity for relating to the Sacred which exists within a maturing personality. The characteristics of adolescent religiosity are reflective of an immature personality and yet expressive of a developing maturity.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Religion

Contemporary Western society is experiencing both a turning away from religion and a turning towards religion. Church membership is decreasing and criticism of Church rules and practices is increasing. The second Vatican Council, which convened in the early Sixties, helped prepare the way for this by introducing reforms into Catholicism. The members of the Council, all the Catholic bishops of the world, described themselves thus:

> Coming together in unity from every nation under the sun, we carry in our hearts the hardships, the bodily and mental distress, the sorrows, longings, and hopes of all the peoples entrusted to us, we urgently turn our thoughts to all the anxieties by which modern man is afflicted (Abbott, 1966, p. 5).

Until Vatican II the Catholic Church was a comparatively closed system governed by a hierarchy, almost impervious to those movements which might threaten established norms. However, "when the Council Fathers came together, they immediately saw the need of setting forth a radically different vision of the Church, more biblical, more historical, more vital and dynamic (A. Dulles, S. J., Introduction to "The Church", in Abbott, 1966, pp. 10-11)." Once the Catholic Church allowed itself to become open to reform, the whole flood of pent-up thoughts and feelings of twentieth-century man burst in upon it. This was given impetus by critics and intellectuals of past centuries who had been

silenced or condemned by the Church. It was now impossible for the Church to become as closed as it had been. Mass education had produced on a larger scale than ever before people who thought for themselves and refused to be blindly led by dictates in which they had no say; the mass media made available to the whole of society the comments of Church critics and the differing opinions of the Church leaders themselves. Thus the Church was confronted with the possibility of deeply radical changes. Since the Catholic Church is the largest single Christian denomination in the world, its changes have had more widespread impact than those of other Christian Churches. However, many of these other Churches have been equally instrumental in updating practices, becoming vocal in public affairs, and making religion a thought-provoking subject through best-selling literature.

Interrelated with the present religious crisis is the acceleration of technology. Technological advances have allowed Western society to experience a widespread affluence and leisure which has never before existed. The mass media has brought about the universal dissemination of ideas to which people are constantly exposed. Large numbers of people are becoming more informed and better educated than ever before, and the amount of leisure time at their disposal is increasing. As a result, contemporary society is characterized by such phenomena as moral "freedom" (exemplified by generally relaxed sexual standards and liberalized attitudes toward abortion and enthanasia) and the need of increasing numbers of people for counselling and psychiatric treatment in order to cope with their own lives. The present anxious state of

society, coupled with the present openness of Christianity to reform, seems to be a sign that we are on the threshold of a breakthrough in religious thought and practice. Dupré (1972) says:

> Of late, man ... begins to have some afterthoughts about the one-sidedness with which he has pursued total "control" over his environment. Occasionally he wonders whether the achievement was worth its price. Western man's unconditional commitment to the technical and the pragmatic has banalized life for the sake of controlling it. Somehow he feels that he is leading a diminished existence. The original enthusiasm for secular society has quickly waned in the light of our present crises (p. 24).

"Religion" has come to be popularly conceived as adherence to one of many religious denominations. In the Western world, these denominations have been largely Christian in name, basing their teachings on those of Christ. They grew out of the Reformation and each has evolved its own set of rules to which its members are expected to conform. The leaders of the Reformation emphasized the need to fulfill one's duty by working. Man is intrinsically wicked and evil, they said, and cannot find salvation until he compensates for his wickedness by proving his worthiness through hard work. In the society of man, however, work, when combined with shrewdness, yields more than merely spiritual remuneration: it produces capital, and the resulting wealth leads to the establishment of commercial businesses. In large measure, the Christian emphasis on hard work and self-denial contributed to the rise of capitalistic economy. Over the centuries, the equation of salvation with hard work and material success became generally known as the "Protestant Ethic". Its influence pervades the whole of Western society. With a general increase in introspection and pondering due to education

and free time, many people are becoming increasingly disillusioned as capitalism accelerates technology to the point of alienating the person from himself and from society. As the chink in the armour of capitalism widens, a desperate attempt is being made by individuals in all levels of society to find some meaning independent of material success which helps them to unify themselves as integral human beings. Alienation tends to fragment a person such that his various roles are separated from each other, and while attempting to play the particular role expected of him, he becomes more encrusted with it and more estranged from the core, the centre of his being. All organisms tend toward unity, and human beings are no exception. For many individuals, rigid adherence to the rules of one particular church is not sufficient; they are obligated to search into the "why" of rules. The Church, accustomed for centuries to speaking on its own authority, offering little justification for its dogmatic statements and allowing little dialogue in its policy-making, has difficulty communicating with such people, because much of the Church's statements are irrelevant in their everyday lives and are ridden with cliches. Official statements from the Vatican are even today written in Latin and later translated. It is impossible to expect a dynamic spirit to flow from such a procedure.

Church leaders are alarmed at the increasing number of people who refuse to accept tenets and dogmas which seemingly have little relevance to their personal lives. Many Church leaders find themselves identifying with this questioning, non-passive attitude. The ferment of religious unrest is growing; even among clergymen it is evident in

varying degrees.

There is a growing realization that religion must be a reality in everyday life if it is to be meaningful. Religion must somehow be the means of unifying a person: it must put him in touch with what is deepest inside him, with his ultimate concerns, and unite the depth of his being with the mundane and practical aspects of his life, so that the whole of his existence can take on a transcendent quality. Traditional orthodox religion is being rejected as empty ritual, and a general quest is being made for the discovery of reality in religion. This quest is leading to the rise of various movements, such as the Jesus movement, Pentecostalism, and Eastern mysticism. Further evidence of increased interest in religion is the establishment of Religious Studies departments in most universities in North America and the expanding number of students enrolled in the courses being offered.

The Problem of Adolescent Religiosity

One sector of society traditionally sensitive to innovative movements is youth. Rarely is youth conscious of its roots, because it is a time or freshness, and its many new experiences are tasted but not blended together, nor are they assimilated with the experiences of others before them. Youth has little sense of history, and tradition is often disregarded because of its unclear relationship to the present. Whatever is new and fresh is considered by youth to be desirable because it is so much like youth itself.

Contemporary youth are acutely afflicted with a sense of alienation, from the past, from present-day society, and very often from

themselves because of lack of direction and indecisiveness. Adolescence is in itself a period of alienation, a limbo state fraught with the trauma of transition from childhood to adulthood. In our present historical period, when machines are more efficient and often more useful than men, the adolescent must experience not only those tensions inherent in personal development, but also a sense of hopelessness and estrangement in the face of a world in which technology and the economy resulting from it are often perceived as being of greater importance than the people they are intended to serve.

At this time, when the popular notion of religion is undergoing radical change, youth is necessarily caught up in the shifting tide of societal attitudes towards religion. There currently appears to be an increased rejection of traditional "religion" in favour of more unorthodox religious movements. Adolescent attendance at church services is declining, whereas "Jesus" prayer meetings and rallies experience support from great numbers of youth. In recent years youth has also shown increased interest in Yoga, transcendental meditation and other Eastern religious practices. Today's youth are obviously seeking direction from sources other than the materialist direction to which capitalism consistently leads. Despite the disenchantment with contemporary religion, there presently exists an active search for an ultimate meaning which gives purpose to their present existence. In many respects, the pursuit of ultimate purpose can be understood as being as powerful as ever.

If an individual is capable of searching for an ultimate, "something" beyond his immediate existence, he likewise has the capacity

for awareness of his own transcendence. Insofar as this awareness is the expression of the union that exists between the depth and superficiality of his being, he is capable of appreciating the reality of religion. It is valid, then, to speak of man's religiosity. With the present evidence of youth's search for meaning, it is likewise valid to speak of adolescent religiosity.

Purpose and Methods of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is to explore two universal phenomena, religion and adolescence, and to discover the relationship between them in the context of contemporary Western society. This study does not question whether man is a religious creature; it is based on the premise that man is religious and that therefore at each stage of his development man is both actually and potentially capable of somehow relating to the transcendent: actually, because he is religious; potentially, because he is constantly growing and increasing in cognitive and existential awareness. This study explores some of the ways man relates to the transcendent during the adolescent stage of his development.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: (1) a review, synthesis and interpretation of some of the literature in the field of religious psychology (Chapter 2); (2) a review of some of the literature in the field of adolescent psychology and an attempt to show how behavioral manifestations during adolescence are reflective of qualities which characterize humanity at all stages of development (Chapter 3); (3) an attempt to construct a theory about (a) the significance of religion (as discussed in Chapter 2) during the adolescent period (as discussed in

Chapter 3) and, (b) the extent to which adolescents are capable of being actually religious (Chapter 4); (3) an analysis of the religiosity of some fictional adolescents for the purpose of substantiating and illustrating the theory in Chapter 4 (Chapter 5).

Throughout the thesis, the term "religiosity" is used, for lack of a better term, to describe the dynamic positive elements which underly a person's religious experiences, attitudes and behaviour and which thereby constitute his religious personality. It is necessary to operationalize it thus for the purposes of this thesis, as the connotation of "religiosity" is often pejorative, and even the dictionary meaning is limited.[1] Thus, "religiosity" is here used in the above sense, implying a relationship with the transcendent that is positive and growth-producing.

Relevance of the Existential Approach to the Present Study

The assumptions underlying this thesis are heavily influenced by the philosophical tenets of general existential thought. Existential psychology, which in large measure is based upon existential philosophy, denotes an attitude toward the human being. It cannot be best understood as a school or a method, but as an approach to understanding the mysteries of subjective life. The existentialist acknowledges that man is motivated by drives and forces, and that behaviour can be manipulated, but this is not his fundamental view of man. The existential viewpoint

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[1] The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines religiosity as "religiousness, religious feeling or sentiment."

understands man as unique, a person who experiences drives, forces and behaviour in his own unique way, not according to a preconceived mechanistic system. The pre-existing patterns according to which man acts must always be understood, according to existential thought, within the context of his presently-lived experiences. The experiencing person exists within his own reality which is composed of the unique combination of his hereditary characteristics, the childhood experiences which helped mold his personality, the later experiences which have influenced his actions, and the freedom of choice he now exercises in the present situation. To exclusively consider only the "hows" and "whys" of human behaviour leads to the danger of overlooking what is most important--the fact that this person is, and is dynamic, emerging, becoming.

Basic to existential theory is the idea that man makes himself what he is. External influences limit his choices but do not determine his course of action. To understand man is to understand a deeply complex process which is continually changing and progressing. It is to realize his elusiveness and unpredictability. To understand man is to realize that he cannot be totally understood. Man is always capable of searching deeper into himself to discover greater truths. Artists are able to express what is deepest, most basic and most true not only because they have a deep experiential knowledge of man, but also because they express this knowledge by means which allow for the subjectivity and dynamism of human beings. Symbols and metaphors allow the expression of the uniqueness and individuality of the artist-creator, the one being created and the one who experiences the creation. In art one sees

externally the feelings and passions which well up from the depths of a person's being. Nietzsche claimed, "Only artists ... dare to show us the human being as he is, down to the last muscle, himself and himself alone ... (in Kaufman, 1956, p. 101)." The expression of feelings and passions is always unique but when the depth of one person touches the depth of another, there is always some commonality.

Rollo May (1961) asserts that existential psychology must endeavor "to understand the nature of this man who <u>does</u> the experiencing and to <u>whom</u> the experiences happen (p. 14)." May emphasizes the Kierkegaardian idea of subjective truth: for the individual person, truth lies in his own subjectivity; truth exists for the person only insofar as he participates in it and finds meaning in it. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, proof by means of statistical evidence is at best unnecessary, and possibly even misleading because it is such a small part of the whole truth. Scientific truth is objective, and although there is much about human beings that science can teach, the knowledge it imparts is knowledge <u>about</u> persons rather than knowledge <u>of</u> persons: it is knowledge resulting from dissection and analysis--exterior knowledge. The person also has interior knowledge of himself, and for him, <u>this</u> is also truth. Behavioural science is rigid and shallow when it reduces the human being to a behavioural machine and refuses to acknowledge the uniqueness of each person, or the subjective nature of his interior experiences. The present thesis claims that the knowledge <u>of</u> human beings--that is, an understanding of their subjective world--is expressed most clearly in art. For this reason, an art-form--the novel--is being used to give

expression to the theory contained in this thesis. The good novelist has the ability to create characters who are unique persons, yet reveal his own insight into many of the commonalities of humanity. Thus, a good novelist is able to create a blend between the universal and the particular.

Existential psychologists stress discovery of the personal sense of being--the inner knowing of oneself as an existing person capable of perceiving the world. According to the existential viewpoint, being is always being-in-the-world. Man is never a totally isolated self. "The world", according to May, is "the structure of meaningful relationships, in which a person exists and in the design of which he also participates (1967, p. 5)." There are three aspects to a person's world: the "world around" (biological world), the "with-world" (the world of other humans) and the "own-world" (the world of himself). The progress of civilization has decreased our problems with the "world-around". Most human problems arise in the "with-world", and these have been dealt with in various schools of psychological thought. The existential approach stresses the basic importance of relationship existing in the "own-world"; the way we relate to ourselves is basic to the way we see the world.

A consideration of the existential thought underlying this thesis is important for the following further reasons: (1) man is here considered as a dynamic being capable of molding his own life. Since adolescence is one stage in man's development, whatever is regarded as characteristic of man in general can also be regarded as characteristic of the adolescent. Therefore, the adolescent must be considered as

complex, continually changing, capable (albeit potentially) of molding his own life, and above all, as unique in his individual possession of the basic characteristics of man. (2) The apparent relationship between alienation and religiosity at the adolescent stage suggests a basic relationship between the problem of the "own-world" and the problem of religion. (3) In a person's search for ultimate meaning in his life, he seeks union within himself throughout his whole development (this is further discussed in Chapter 3). This search inevitably involves existential tensions within him in his day-to-day living: the maturation process brings with it an intellectual and experiential discovery of his finiteness and the seeming futility of striving for ultimate union. (4) The analysis of religiosity is in itself an existential problem for a writer who works from the premise that man is a religious being. To consider religiosity as a phenomenon beyond drives, motivations and behavioural conditioning is to acknowledge the possibility of a faith element which is authentic, mysterious and impossible to completely discuss analytically.

Advantages of this Approach

The existential approach is global in its recognition of the infinite number of realities which influence the nature of man, and therefore, the nature of any given individual. It also focuses on what man in his freedom is capable of <u>becoming</u>, as well as what he <u>is</u>. This distinction is particularly helpful in the study of adolescence, because it is a developmental period of great sensitivity and vulnerability; it

is the immediate preparation for adulthood. The world of childhood is past. Adolescence is the time when one begins to perceive the world as an adult, when attitudes are becoming adult attitudes. Impressions made upon the personality during this period will be intensified in later development. Therefore, the process of becoming is crucial during adolescence.

The theoretical approach employed in this thesis provides a basis for practical considerations related to both adolescence and religiosity. Logical evidence will be used to substantiate the theory. When a theory does not have a logical foundation, the practice which is based upon it tends to become unhinged and inconsistent, and little unity exists between the theory and the practice. If theory is well thought out and defended, however, the logical outcome is practice which is consistently linked with the theory. Once theory has been well founded and established, practice inevitably flows from it.

Limitations of this Approach

This study, global as it is in character, does not focus on one specific problem within the area of adolescent religiosity. Since the intent of the thesis is to generate insight into the general nature of adolescent religiosity, it offers few final solutions and few practical conclusions.

Human beings in themselves have obvious limitations. Many people spend most of their life coping rather shallowly with the nitty-gritty of every day, rarely rising above themselves to see the universal

import of their moment-to-moment actions. To constantly emphasize the depth of a person's reality is to be in danger of distorting the total picture of that person's life. Specifically, an emphasis on the adolescent's existential trauma and search for ultimate union holds the possibility of falsifying the totality of the adolescent's life. Not capable of completely understanding their own nature, adolescents tend to shuffle almost blindly through this period of life in pursuit of momentary pleasure and temporary relief from personal frustration. Life holds very little meaning for them beyond their present pains and pleasures, and most of their energy tends to be poured into reducing the former and increasing the latter.

Admittedly, there is the danger of attributing more to the human being than actually exists; but there is even greater danger of short-changing his capacity to be deeply in touch with the reality of his own being. To claim that human existence is hum-drum and inconsequential is to deny the infinite potential in any given human being. Presumably a proper balance in this regard will lead to greater truth.

Conclusion

This thesis, then, is concerned with religion as it is manifested in the lives of contemporary adolescents in Western society. "Religion" must be explored both historically and existentially, and "adolescence" must be considered both universally and particularly in a Western context. Since the assumption is made at the outset that man is religious by nature, this implies that the adolescent is religious by nature. The

main intent of the thesis is to discover how the adolescent manifests his religiosity. This discovery finds expression in characters created by literary artists.

The approach of the thesis is theoretical and existential because of the global and supra-rational nature of the subject matter. Religion is here considered in its totality--that is, as a phenomenon which is much greater and deeper than its behavioural manifestations--and the existential approach seems to be the approach which best maintains the mystery of man's religious nature and which allows the universal aspects of religion to blend with the individual's unique search for the ultimate.

The writer hopes that this thesis provides a convincing argument for the adolescent as a religious being and convincing evidence for the particular manifestations of the adolescent's religiosity.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION, RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE

The first purpose of this chapter is to uncover and clarify meanings of "religion" in the context of Judaeo-Christian culture and Western society. The second purpose is to discover where "religious experience" fits into the life of the individual within this same context. Thirdly, this chapter will explore the origins of religious attitude and its relation to religious experience.

Religion

In a basic sense, religion is a universal phenomenon, embraced in one form or another by every culture throughout history. It may be defined as the totality of the thoughts, feelings, acts and experiences of a person or group whereby they seek, voluntarily or involuntarily, a relationship with whatever they consider to be divine or worthy of devotion.

Historically, man has proved to be a religious creature. From phenomenological studies of religious man based on historical documents (Vergote, 1969, p. 41), it appears that primitive man's religious sense co-existed with his cosmological sense: that is, he experienced himself as a being-in-the-world, an integral part of the cosmos, and simultaneously he perceived that he was participating in an existence infinitely beyond himself. This combination--the sense of being one with the cosmos and the sense of one's transcendence--seems to be the core of man's religious nature. Set within a cultural and historical context, it has

assumed characteristics which vary according to cultural and historical period.

William James (1929) distinguishes an exclusive religious life from a second-hand religious life. He says that the great majority of human beings adhere to ready-made religion, in which their beliefs and behaviours are shaped by the experiences of others. There are only a few for whom religion is "an acute fever"; that is, there is a creative dynamism within them which illuminates an aspect of religion which has never before been considered. They are the geniuses, the leaders, the "pattern-setters" for succeeding generations. These include certainly the founders of the great religions of the world and perhaps of the leading Old Testament figures and the outstanding figures of the modern era.

Rudolph Otto (1958) expands this idea. There is no such thing as innate religion, he says, as religion is a historical phenomenon, "in so far as history on the one hand develops our disposition for knowing the holy and on the other is itself repeatedly the manifestation of the holy (p. 177)." Otto refers to the individual's sense as being an a priori cognition; in every man's nature there exists a predisposition for receptivity and acknowledgment of religion. Only very few, however, have the capacity to independently produce, question and create in the religious sphere. Otto calls such a person "the prophet".

Terminology proves to be a problem when discussing the object-or-person-worthy-of-devotion. "God", in a semantic sense, is a dead and meaningless term of reference, overlaid as it is with countless connotations and private interpretations. Writers in the field of

religious study tend to coin their own term, or adopt one which is meaningful within their own frame of reference. Otto (1958) speaks of "the numinous", in which is contained "goodness" and "holiness", but which transcends all rational comprehension of the meaning of these concepts. It is a quality which the human mind is incapable of grasping totally. Eliade (1959) speaks of "the sacred", a reality of a wholly different order from the material and the human, but which is manifest in what he calls the natural profane world. The sacred, according to Eliade, is ultimate reality. Buber (1958) speaks of "the eternal Thou", which expresses a relation between two beings, the finite creature and the immanent-transcendent-wholly Other-wholly-Same which defies description and analysis. This thesis will speak of the Sacred, spelled with a capital 'S' as a gesture of respect and humility. All these terms, of course, while having essentially the same meaning, point to man's poverty in attempting to express the ineffable.

Western religion is, for the most part, built upon the interpretations of the teachings of Christ. These teachings arose in the context of ancient Judaism, and were the fulfillment of all that had been written and taught since the time of Abraham. The call of Abraham to the land of Sichem constituted the birth of the Jewish nation. He was in deep and constant communion with the Sacred; this communion resulted in a covenant: "I will bless you and I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore.... All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants.... (Gen. 22:17-18). The descendants of Abraham understood themselves as a

holy people for whom the Sacred was a person who had specially chosen them and whom they so revered that they never said aloud his special name: Yahweh, "He-Who-is". The Jews ascribed many attributes to Yahweh, all of them couched in personal terms. They especially lauded his constant faithfulness in spite of their repeated infidelities. Yet he was never seen as a mere super-human; they continually reminded themselves of his total otherness. Monotheism was the distinguishing factor between the Jews and their contemporaries; for them, Yahweh possessed in himself the infinity that their neighbors distributed among a plurality of deities.

As centuries passed, the Jews became less concerned with the spiritual fatherhood of Yahweh and became preoccupied with material wealth and power. As they gradually lost their lands and possessions to their pagan neighbors, many of them forsook Yahweh in favor of pagan gods. Others looked forward to the restoration of their kingdom which was being foretold by thier prophets. Someone would be sent by Yahweh, it was said--the Anointed One, the Christ--who would overthrow their enemies and establish for the Jews a powerful kingdom. According to Christian belief, Jesus was this Anointed One, who came not to establish a kingdom according to the Jewish ideal, but to make a new covenant, a ratification of the covenant with Abraham, whereby all people who adhered to him would be blessed, and he would be faithful to them as Yahweh had been faithful: "Make your home in me as I make mine in you". (John 15:3). He, himself, was the visible, personal manifestation of the Sacred.

At the heart of Christianity, then, is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Sacred made visible. Faith in the revelation contained in the Scriptures is necessary for a profession of belief in Christianity. If one does not have this faith, one seeks another gateway to the Sacred, or proclaims like Freud (1928) that the Sacred is non-existent and that religion is an illusion, a neurotic escape from one's anxieties. Freud's analysis of religion, typical among modern atheists, cannot be lightly dismissed, as his writings have had a colossal impact on contemporary thought. However, Freud was a scientist and his methods led him to reduce all human phenomena to naturalistic explanations. His assumption that religion has no future and that the power of human intelligence, especially in science, is the ruler of the future, is antithetical to the assumptions of the present study. The religious aspect of man's nature is here taken as an existential fact; the concern of this study is with the "how" rather than the "why" of religion. The fact that Western civilization is historically rooted in Christianity indicates that the religion of Western man, whatever form it may take and for whatever reason it is maintained, cannot be divorced from Christianity.

Erich Fromm (1950) argues that Western man is not entirely freed from his primitive ancestry and that what we label as "religion" is actually a thin veneer covering man's primitive desire for idolatry. When he is unable to achieve a world-view and perceive his place in the universe, he reverts to petty idolatries, which Fromm calls primitive forms of religion: ritualism, cults of cleanliness and orderliness, totemism displayed in such devotions as excessive loyalty to one's

country. Such actions reveal a neurosis which is often undeniably linked with religion. Experiences fed by neurotic tendencies are often seen subjectively as religious experiences, and as such are considered dangerous by psychologists: that is, they perpetuate a fantasy world and thus are detrimental to the formation of a more healthy personality capable of real religious experience--that is, one which is not rooted primarily in the neurotic.

Religious Experience

What are the characteristics of a real religious experience? How is it distinguishable from an illusion of the mind? Reverend F. Copleston, in a debate with Bertrand Russell, defined religious experience as:

> ... a loving, but unclear, awareness of some object which irresistibly seems to the experiencer as something which cannot be pictured or conceptualized, at least during the experience. (In Russell, 1967, p. 148.)

The "reality" he speaks of must be understood as an objective reality. Otto stresses this when he speaks of "the feeling of the numinous". He does not mean merely a subjective feeling, but rather a subjective awareness of a transcendent object. Vergote (1969) in discussing the etymology of the word "experience", shows that it designates a certain knowledge acquired by the mind from sources exterior to it. It is the point of a person's contact with the world outside himself. He says, "in psychology, experience means the manner of knowing through an intuitive and affective grasping of meanings and values perceived in a world which puts out qualitatively differentiated signs and signals (p. 27)." Thus, if "religious experience" is a valid concept, it implies by definition that

some kind of real object is being experienced. Religious experience is rooted in affectivity, but is never separated from the intellect; in discussing this, Vergote (1965) refers to "the osmosis which links feeling and mind (p. 18)."

Theologically, man's recognized need for salvation is at the heart of religious experience. It springs from a desire for the Sacred and a sense of poverty and helplessness. This need inspires a cry for help. At that point, in Buber's language, the I stands open and naked to the eternal Thou. (Parenthetically, it might be hypothesized that our present age of technology, which is alienating man from himself and from others, is the cause of many religious experiences reflected in contemporary art, music, literature and various youth subcultures. If so, Freud's assertion that science is overthrowing religion, may prove contrary to what in actual fact is occurring.)

Religious experience can be discussed in terms of motivation: why is man religious? What are the characteristics of religion which attract people to it? Writers such as Freud, Gordon Allport and Fromm present theoretical explanations to such questions. Secondly, religious experience can be discussed in terms of its own nature: what is the character of the religious experience itself? Both approaches are valid and deserve consideration, although the bias of this thesis is toward the latter because of the primary importance of knowing something of the nature of an experience before questioning its raison d'être. Fromm (1950) distinguishes between two basic types of religion: authoritarian and humanistic. Authoritarian religion, he says, places the Sacred

outside and above man and makes it the symbol of complete power. Man, in his sense of powerlessness, projects onto the Sacred the most valuable of his faculties, his reason and his capacity to love. This process alienates him from himself, as "everything he has is now God's and nothing is left in him. His only access to himself is through God (p. 50)." This experience derives from unconscious masochistic tendencies. It forces man to consider himself a "sinner". In humanistic religion, man is seen as having powers of reason and love which he must develop in order to achieve self-realization. One recognizes one's limitations, but works toward optimum strength within them. In humanistic religion the Sacred is a symbol of the powers which are potential in man himself.

Allport (1950) distinguishes between immaturity and maturity in religion. The immature religious sentiment is one which remains primarily concerned with self-gratification. It is not open to development; it is not, strictly speaking, religious experience, because it refuses to allow the Sacred to be manifested in existential situations. It clings to beliefs learned in childhood or extraneously acquired during later years. Because it seeks comfort and self-gratification, its basic motives are the drives and desires of the body. Mature religious sentiment, on the other hand, allows for growth through openness to all experience. It is differentiated, continually establishing and re-establishing patterns of belief through discriminatory processes; it is fed by a dynamic drive which has become independent of its origins and "cannot be regarded as a servant of other desires (p. 72)"; it is

related to a consistent standard of morality; it is comprehensive in character, yet does not claim to have a monopoly on truth; it achieves a harmony in spite of seeming inconsistencies, such as the problem of human suffering; it realizes that faith is a risk, yet still clings to it, all the while being open to inevitable doubt.

Thus there are two extremes in the area of religion, which can be tentatively labelled as the neurotic and the healthy. The religious sentiment of most people is probably a blend of the two, although there will be a greater tendency toward one than the other. Whichever of the two toward which a person tends, that is the clue to the nature of his religious personality. Yet one cannot ever dissociate religious psychology from theology. Presumably the healthy person is in greater touch with the world of reality and therefore has a more real experience of the Sacred. However, grace does not choose between personalities; it is freely bestowed by the Sacred. Therefore, when exploring the nature of religious experience, one cannot make categorical statements about what is desirable and undesirable or real and unreal. One can only speak in "probablies" and make inferences based on cautious judgements on a person's life as a whole. James' slight paraphrase of Scripture is the ultimate criterion: "By their fruits ye shall know them, not by their roots (1929, p. 21)."

What, then, is the character of the religious experience? The feeling of one's dependence upon and need for the Sacred is its essential element. Otto analyzes the aspects of this feeling. It contains a sense of profound respect (the "fear of God" spoken about in Scripture

and theology) which comes about when one catches a glimpse of his creatureliness in the face of the inaccessibility and remoteness of his Creator. It contains also a sense of overpoweringness when rational man is faced with a non-rational Being which eludes his comprehension. And it contains a sense of "urgency" or "energy" which means activity, dynamism, vitality; it is a sense of intense movement. The religious experience is the point at which the profane is regarded in terms of the Sacred, when any element of the cosmos becomes, for the experiencer, the expression of a totally other reality. This is a hierophany, the manifestation within some element of a reality of a wholly different order.

Novak (1971) speaks of religious experience in terms of conversion. To be religious, he says, is to be converted (to re-focus one's way of life) to the sense of the Sacred. It is a continual process of integration--breakdown--breakthrough--reintegration.

Religious experience is manifested concretely in the exercise of prayer. Pierre Ranwez (1965) says that prayer is the expression of an absolutely original experience, if one is really aware of the actual presence of the Sacred. He quotes St. Bernard, who speaks of having been

> ... visited by the Word ... although he has entered my soul several times I never felt his coming.... He is alive and powerful; as soon as he came within me, he roused my sleeping soul; he stirred, touched and wounded my heart which was weak and hard as stone.... He did not reveal himself to me by any movement; none of my senses perceived his secret coming; only in my heart I knew his presence.... (1965, p. 47).

Ranwez lists, according to the doctrine of Aquinas, three signs of a religious experience. These are: (1) an attraction to the Sacred

when one has seen its manifestation; (2) a desire for the Sacred to continue manifesting itself (detaching one from what is merely profane); and, (3) a sense of peace, integrity, joy.

Religious Attitude

Proceeding from religious experience to religious attitude, we may define the latter as an act of the intellect which gives assent to the spontaneous affective movement which is the experience. An attitude is "intentionally assumed" (Vergote, 1969, p. 201). Attitude is defined by Allport (1935) as "a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". He lists four conditions for the formation of attitudes: (1) the integration of successive similar experiences; (2) differentiation of experiences, which acts as a discriminatory function; (3) the traumatic emotional experience; and, (4) imitation (or identification) which is based on modelling rather than on original experience.

To apply these conditions to the field of religion, a religious attitude is formed by: the unifying effect of many similar religious experiences; differentiating one's religious experiences in a manner which promotes conscious discrimination rather than repression; the intensity of a single religious experience; and the assuming of the religious beliefs held by persons one identifies with. Within this scheme the variety and source of religious attitudes are infinite.

An attitude flows from some experience. In the religious sphere, attitude is so integrally linked with experience that there is little

division between them. In religion, experience is the act of the Sacred upon the human attitude the act of the human upon the Sacred. Theologically, the distinction is one between mysticism and asceticism, where mysticism denotes the divine act and asceticism, the human act. For man to be religious he must have a relationship with the divine Other, who is the Sacred. In any relationship there must be two movements: the I and the Thou, moving towards each other. Ideally, they eventually become one movement, but both actions must be present. In the religious sphere, the Sacred moves first: the experience; the human being responds: the attitude. They are necessary concommitants.

Conclusion

Analyzed from a phenomenological perspective, man's religious nature appears to consist of a blend of immanence and transcendence: he perceives himself as being integrally united with the here-and-now universe and yet participating in the existence of the Sacred, which transcends the universe. However, the religion of most people throughout history seems to be static rather than dynamic and creative. This suggests that man, although religious by nature, has difficulty in discovering a unity between his day-to-day existence and his ultimate, transcendent existence and thus tends to either deny his religious nature or accept religious beliefs and practices based on vicarious experiences.

The religion of Western man is rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition whose central belief is that Jesus Christ is the revelation of the Sacred to man. This fact particularizes for the purpose of this thesis what is universal: that man, in whatever cultural context he

exists, strives for some means whereby he can relate to the Sacred.

The genuine meeting of man with the Sacred is called religious experience. It is characterized by a sense of one's finiteness united with a longing for infinity and a desire for union with the Sacred in one's day-to-day life. Psychologically, religious experience is a charactistic of the healthy personality.

Religious attitude is the cognitive assertion of religious experience. It is the act whereby man makes actual the potential within him to be a religious creature.

CHAPTER III

ADOLESCENCE

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the nature of adolescence in its universal and particular forms, and as one stage in man's development, displaying by means of its own particular characteristics, the commonality basic to all of humanity. Some universal characteristics of adolescents will be discussed briefly; the characteristics of early and late adolescence within contemporary Western society will be discussed at some length.

An attempt will be made to show that what is basic to the adolescent is basic to the person at every stage of his development: that is, there is a common thread woven throughout the life of the person into which the other threads in his life are woven. One basic commonality shared by all men is their desire for union. The implications of this, especially as seen within a Christian context, will be discussed in this chapter.

The search for union assumes various forms throughout a person's life. The predominant characteristics of each particular life stage are in many instances manifestations of the desire for union. An attempt will be made to show the means by which the adolescent displays his desire for union and the implications which these means reveal about the nature of adolescence.

Some Universal Characteristics of Adolescence

The exact meaning of "adolescence" varies according to the point

of view from which it is approached. For the most part, "adolescence" is a term denoting the developmental passage from childhood to adulthood, and is universally understood as beginning with puberty. In addition to the maturation of the primary sexual organs, adolescence is characterized by the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics and rapid enlargement of muscle and bone structure. The exact age of the onset of puberty varies according to the criteria used, since all sexual characteristics do not appear simultaneously. It most commonly commences between the eleventh and thirteenth year for girls and between the twelfth and fourteenth year for boys.

Concurrent with the physical changes which characterize adolescence is an increase in expended energy, an awakening of the sex drive and an increased ability to think rationally and abstractly. All of these changes have psychological and sociological ramifications which vary from culture to culture. In most societies, however, it is considered a time of initiation into adulthood, the number of adolescent years apparently being proportionate to the complexity of the society. In most primitive societies there are ritualized initiation ceremonies during which a boy is expected to become a man, and a girl, a woman. In European and North American societies adolescence is usually considered to last throughout the teen years, and often into the early twenties.

Adolescence in Western Society

Although the beginning of adolescence is fairly clear-cut, the criteria denoting the end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood are quite unclear. The Committee on Adolescence from the Group for the

Advancement of Psychiatry lists two sets of criteria for defining adulthood: function definitions (for example, earning one's living, assuming responsibility within marriage) and status definitions (for example, being allowed to vote). Although definitions rest upon societal tradition and law, they commonly are contradictory. For example, a person twelve years of age is considered an adult by movie theatres and airline companies but is otherwise considered to be still a child. The age for drinking and voting--a sign of adult status--has been standardized in most places at eighteen years, but most persons of this age are students who, because they have not yet assumed full financial responsibility for themselves, are still somewhat dependent upon their parents. In the United States, males are eligible for draft at eighteen years of age, another sign of adult status. In some parts of the United States, where the drinking and voting laws have not yet changed, it is possible to have "the status paradox of the married soldier who may not enter a bar and drink, and who cannot vote, but who can procreate and kill (Committee on Adolescence, 1968, p. 32)."

Currently in Canada, over half the population is under twenty-five.[1] Other Western nations have comparable statistics, and are experiencing much focus on youth. Youth is glamourized and idealized in advertising, books, movies, and contemporary music. The music enjoyed by teen-agers in former years, for example, was considered infantile and somewhat inferior according to adult standards, whereas

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[1] 1971 census data, June, 1971.

the Rock music currently popular among adolescents is being increasingly considered as an art form in its own right, and Rock musicians are being taken seriously among art-conscious adults. With the lowering of the voting age, politicians have become conscious of the "youth vote" and have geared their campaigns with a greater awareness of the youth market. Today's youth are conscious of their new prominence:

> The teenager has become very conscious of his special status. He is eager for the accompanying privileges, impatient or downright defiant of the restrictions, and not a little cocky about the vaguely defined power his group wields (Committee on Adolescence, 1968, p. 30).

Adolescence can be divided into two developmental phases: early and late. In passing through these two phases the adolescent develops a certain psycho-social equilibrium, which is one mark of maturity. The rapid physical changes which begin to occur at puberty tend to cause psychological imbalance: the adolescent is caught off guard, as it were, and his emotional reactions to these changes are unable to keep pace with the changes themselves. Results of one test which attempted to discover rates of emotional development, show a very gradual increase in emotional development, except for girls between the ages of thirteen and fifteen.[2] There is a constant state of confusion within him, and he tends to be emotionally inconsistent. As the rate of physical growth decreases, his emotions "catch up", so to speak, and

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[2]Cole, L. and Hall, I., Psychology of Adolescence, Figure 12-2, p. 266.

he gradually reaches a balanced state, where his body is somewhat in tune with his emotions and intellect.

Early Adolescence

Early adolescence, which begins at puberty, is characterized in part by increased physical activity due to great spurts of energy. Paradoxically, it may also be a time of lethargy and apathy when the adolescent seems to expend little energy and manifest virtually no interest in anything.

Early adolescence marks the beginning of independence from parents. The adolescent increasingly seeks approval and emotional support from his peers. Because of their psychological importance, friends become aware of a status hierarchy. His place in this hierarchy is a matter of major importance to him, and his style of hair and clothing, his conduct and the types of activities he engages in, to a great extent follow the norm set by his peers. Since this intense need for peer approval is characteristic of the normal adolescent, it is interesting to speculate on the origin of the norms. Obviously, norms do not originate within the adolescent himself--at least, certainly not during the early adolescent years. Most adolescents are intent upon sameness, which will make them one with their peers, rather than upon difference. Older adolescents and young adults who occupy the highest places on the status hierarchy, tend to set the trend for those younger than themselves; certainly, it is their example the early adolescent follows, in an attempt to look and act older than he is.

This effort to appear older than one is (in a person emotionally

closer to childhood than adulthood) creates considerable tension. When friendships prove unsatisfactory the adolescent may, in his loneliness, invest his energies into a hobby or increased concentration on his favourite school subject, or into less healthy activities such as overeating. He may seek identification with one or more adults, toward whom he forms a temporary intense emotional attachment. In spite of his desire to be independent of his parents, he often reverts to childish dependence upon them and is constantly in need of their care and concern. Ties of childhood are strong, and are not severed without great struggle.

Because the sexual organs are beginning to mature at this time, the early adolescent develops a keen interest in everything related to sex. He becomes increasingly aware of members of the opposite sex and has a strong desire to appear attractive and acceptable to them. Thus the early adolescent tends strongly towards narcissism and has little genuine concern for others. Because early adolescence is essentially an egocentric period, most adolescent social contacts are "self-centered" rather than "other-centered". His position vis-a-vis other people is tentative, because he is not sure of the nature of the adult personality which is emerging within him.

Sexual awareness is a comparatively sudden phenomenon. For this reason, it becomes fully incorporated into the personality only after a period of time during which experience and maturation take place. This is necessarily a gradual process. During the early adolescent phase, sexual awareness is an additive component to an already existing

personality, and it appears as an almost alien force because of its seemingly disruptive tendencies and its power and forcefulness. The vulnerable adolescent has difficulty coping with his awakened sexuality; its presence in his life, especially when he is confronted with the opposite sex, makes him feel awkward or embarrassed. In order to conquer this new force and to reduce his vulnerability he may try to deny its existence by withdrawing into himself or he may try to show that sexuality is already an integral part of his personality by playing a role of nonchalance and affected maturity.

At this time the physical aspects of sex are of all-consuming interest; emotional concerns become prominent during late adolescence. The early adolescent is intensely aware of his body, both in itself and in relation to the bodies of his peers. The achievement of physical sexual maturity is a matter of great importance to him, and because at this stage he has only begun to mature physically, he is constantly concerned with whether or not his physical development is occurring as he thinks it should, and is anxious lest he be in any way different from his peers.

Sexual-based guilt feelings begin to appear at this time. Guilt is a difficult phenomenon to assess because its source is not always clearly defined and because social mores, to which it is usually linked, are constantly fluctuating, not only from one generation to another, but also from one segment of society to another. It is frequently hypothesized that the major source of adolescent guilt lies in the Puritan-based sexual ethic of Western society. Society is currently

witnessing the gradual breakdown of this ethic, as evidenced by increased pornography in the media and the increasing social acceptance of the "new morality", as manifested in, for example, the repealing of abortion laws, widespread use of contraceptives and various forms of "marriage experiments". Perhaps the general relaxation of societal mores concerning sexual matters somewhat lessens the guilt experienced during the adolescent period; however, it is probable that guilt feelings continue to be a basic characteristic of the adolescent period. Reasons for this include: (1) the traditional tendency within Western society to suppress sexual urges is still dominant in the upbringing of most children and in parental expectation of adolescent behaviour; (2) the adolescent himself experiences sexual anxiety because of the suddenness of physical changes; (3) the adolescent, who in preparation for adulthood, is beginning to form a value system, necessarily begins to experience drives and urges which conflict with his values.

During early adolescence the capacity for abstract thought and formal logic begins to increase. The adolescent begins to reason more systematically and to perceive less egocentrically. The development of his intellect, however, is not necessarily harmonious with his emotional development. With the simultaneous maturation of these two powerful forces, the adolescent gradually learns that he must choose between actions based on reason and actions based on emotion. Because of the volatile nature of early adolescence, however, it is doubtful whether a person at this age makes a real choice; his actions are often based primarily on whim and on desire to eliminate immediate frustration,

rather than upon past experience or detached objectivity.

Late Adolescence

The transition from early to late adolescence occurs during the middle teens when most characteristics of early adolescence still exist but are being gradually tempered by a developing maturity. Late adolescence is characterized by an increasing social sense: the adolescent gradually becomes aware that he is moving into adult society, and he must choose the extent to which he will play the role expected of the emerging adult. This is a difficult choice to make. The adolescent has developed a personal value system, and his new-found intellectual powers have given him a keen sense of justice. He perceives quite clearly many of the discrepancies and contradictions of adult society. In the lives of those close to him he sees dishonesty and hypocrisy; within the constitutions of governments, which ideally exalt the dignity of man, he observes the strong exploiting the weak. His initial reaction to the discrepancies and inconsistencies in society is often strongly negativistic. Only gradually does the adolescent come to realize that society, being a human phenomenon, contains a blend of right and wrong, justice and injustice. His perception of society tends to be highly subjective: he views it in terms of how its positive and negative aspects affect him personally. It offers much that is attractive to him, in terms of security, affluence, status and respect. If he wishes to receive adult society's rewards, however, he must conform at least marginally to demands concerning personal appearance, academic performance, and leisure activity. If he chooses not to conform, he must be

prepared to pay the price. Very often non-conforming adolescents are unable or unwilling to accept the responsibility of their choices. Having rejected adult society, they pour further invective upon it for refusing to pay them the rewards they have already forfeited when they chose the path of non-conformity. (Probably the term "non-conformity" is a mis-nomer. It is doubtful whether anyone consistently chooses what is purely negative. The act of non-conformity to adult society is probably a sign that the sub-society made up of his peers offers greater rewards to him than adult society. In this case, he is choosing one style of conformity in preference to another. He still pays the price of conformity to the sub-society: his choice is, in essence, a choice between differing reward systems.)

The late-adolescent undergoes a gradual decrease in the intense preoccupation with self which characterized his early adolescent period. Notwithstanding his basic egocentrism, the adolescent acquires greater objectivity in his social perceptions. He begins to experience serious concern for others; his sense of justice fosters an interest in social issues, and he is often willing to wholeheartedly commit himself to a cause which he believes will be a means of helping others. His tendency toward involving himself in social "causes" is commonly a reaction against adult society's limited ability to cope with social problems. In his naiveté he assumes that "helping others" is a direct and straightforward process.

During late adolescence affection and tenderness become integrally co-related with sex drive. Thus, sexual experiences become experiences

of sharing and concern, rather than merely self-centered involvements. It is merely a beginning, however: the shift from self-centeredness to other-centeredness is a slow process which continues through adulthood and even into old age. With the general increase in social awareness at this stage, it is almost inevitable that the adolescent becomes aware that other persons are worthy of respect (Arnold, 1960, p. 243). This fact has important implications in his relationships with them.

Adolescence Within the Context of Man

Adolescence is obviously not a complete state in itself: the adolescent is constantly straining towards adulthood. Yet adulthood is not complete in itself either. The individual person, at every stage of his development, can be understood as an incomplete being. Considered existentially, man is a being constantly striving for fulfillment, completion; the frustration and anguish he experiences in this struggle are marks of his humanity. To be human means to suffer in the pursuit of some goal. With each goal attained comes the realization that there is yet another to pursue. The absurdity of human life, according to some existential thinkers, is that the ultimate goal can never be reached.

Central to this thesis is the idea that the desire of man for fulfillment springs from what Fromm (1963, p. 8) has said is the deepest need of man--the need to overcome separateness and to achieve union. Biologically, healthy organisms tend to unite rather than separate, and as an organism increases in complexity the propensity toward union increases in both intensity and difficulty because of its very complexity.

That is, the various elements of the organism are often not in complete harmony with each other in the struggle for union, yet this need is basic, and the struggle of the organism becomes even greater because of the opposition within itself. For man, whose consciousness as well as his biological make-up is composed of many intricate elements, the constant struggle for union constitutes his suffering. This is true at every stage of development. The initial bond of unity is severed at birth, and a sense of aloneness is thrust upon man by virtue of his uniqueness, his distinctness from all other beings. His entire life is a search for union. Fromm claims that man's sense of separation constitutes his basic source of anxiety. Fromm speaks of three ways in which most people attempt to achieve union: (1) orgiastic states, which include sexual orgies, alcoholism and drug inducement--each of which are intense physical attempts to escape separateness; (2) conformity with a group, which is an effort to achieve sameness rather than union; and, (3) creative activity, in which the person tries to unite with something outside himself that becomes merely an extension of himself. In each of these three modes the <u>interpersonal</u> aspect of union is missing. At the heart of man's search for union is his desire for complete fusion with another person.

During adolescence the human experiences for the first time both <u>physical craving</u> and <u>emotional desire</u> for union with another person. He perceives the opposite sex as having the capacity to complement his own incompleteness and seeks to fulfill himself in intimate union. But this union, however complete it seems to be in itself, is transitory. The

fulfillment of complete union continues to be elusive. Union requires a total capacity to give and a total openness to receive. Fromm speaks of it in terms of love, which he defines as "union under the condition of preserving one's integrity (1963, p. 17)" and further defines as "the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love (1963, p. 22)." According to Christian belief, the essence of love is contained in God, or the Sacred, and the most perfect expression of it is Jesus Christ. The Scriptures speak of mankind as having initially experienced a sense of union with the Sacred (the Garden of Eden allegory). Mankind broke away from this union because he mistakenly perceived himself rather than the Sacred as the source of union. The disuniting force which alienated man from the Sacred is the biblical notion of sin. The mission of Jesus was to bring mankind into atonement with the Sacred, so that once again, perfect union could be achieved. According to certain theological thinking based on Scripture, perfect union can only be achieved in the Sacred, through Christ. Teilhard de Chardin (1959) speaks of love as "the affinity of being with being (p. 264)", which is another way of describing union. He refers to the "within-ness" of things, which is a propensity for love, or union, contained within every element in the cosmos. There is an Omega point, he says, toward which the whole cosmos is converging; this Omega point is Christ, and the final convergence at the Omega point will be the culmination of the intense desire not only of man, but of the whole material world, to achieve union.

Man, however, in his search for union, tends to close himself

up, so that in striving for his goal he does the opposite of what is necessary to reach it. Considered in a theological sense, this is sin, a continuation of the initial act of mankind, in which he severed himself from union with the Sacred because he believed that perfect fulfillment could be attained within himself, with his own resources, and without recourse to the Sacred beyond him. What man has discovered within himself is just the opposite: a disharmony among the many intricate elements within him. The disruptive forces within man threaten to destroy him, but there remains within him the primeval desire for union. Man's tendency is to escape from his fragmented state by setting up his own "gods", as Fromm (1950) has pointed out, such as societal cults and rituals and conformism to the point of anonymity. Yet all his efforts toward union--even his attempts at escaping from separateness--are to some degree other-directed. That is, man appears to possess an intuitive knowledge that union cannot take place in himself alone; he must form a potentially unifying relationship with something or someone outside himself. According to Christian thought, the only relationship which will bring ultimate union is relationship with the Sacred, the perfection of which comes only after death.

Adolescence as One Phase in Man's Pursuit of Union

At birth a person becomes a distinct and separate human being. This distinction becomes definitive during adolescence, when one begins to discover that his life is becoming increasingly distinct from that of his parents and that in many regards he is becoming equal to them in status. During childhood there is an identification with parents and a

dependence upon them which is a form of union--the home is the centre of the child's world and the binding force uniting his activities--but this union gradually gives way to a growing desire for independence. The desire for independence usually is accompanied by fear. Although childhood union with parents is no longer sufficient for the adolescent, he knows it to be comfortable and secure, and he knows of no alternative form of union immediately open to him which offers the same degree of security as that union experienced with his parents. Thus the adolescent vacillates between his family and the world outside his home. His whole being is tending toward adulthood because of the maturation process taking place within him; society is beginning to make similar demands upon him that it makes upon adults. Nearly everything in his life points to the necessity of becoming more independent and responsible. Yet the basic desire for union which permeates adolescence makes this a fearsome prospect because it implies disruption of the only union he knows, union with his parents.

Friendship is extremely important to the adolescent because it helps foster union. Friendship is the beginning of a mature quest for union, because it represents a relationship independent of family ties, and because it contains potential for other-centeredness, and thus lays the groundwork for love. In the early stages of adolescence, however, the union sought in friendship appears more as a form of self-preservation, which is gained through conformity. It is important that the adolescent dress and act like his friends, because the more he becomes like them, the more he seems to become one with them. Each

time a friendship breaks up, the adolescent experiences anew the trauma of separation.

As sexual growth continues, most adolescents begin to perceive the possibility of sexual union. Sex is a newly discovered experience which seems to hold possibilities for fulfilling the incomplete adolescent self. At this stage of development, the sexual drive is perhaps the major force behind his pursuit of fulfillment.

Fromm (1963), in assessing human aloneness, says,

> ... the human race in its infancy still feels one with nature. The soil, the animals, the plants are still man's world. He identifies himself with animals, and this is expressed by the wearing of animal masks, by the worshipping of a totem animal or animal gods. But the more the human race emerges from these primary bonds, the more it separates from the natural world, the more intense becomes the need to find new ways of escaping separateness (p. 9).

It is possible to make an analogy between the development of the human race as a whole and the development of the individual person. Primitive man can be compared to the infant, who is still close to nature in the sense that his needs and drives are basically biological. Moving through the world of childhood, he gradually begins to sense his separateness from nature, and when he enters the explosive period of adolescence, the "solution" he often sees to the problem of his isolation is escape. The means of escape which Fromm delineates are commonly observed during the adolescent period; <u>attempted fusion</u> through sexual contact or drug use, during which experience "the world outside disappears (p. 9)"; <u>conformity to the group</u>, an experience which tends towards mindlessness (the "herd mentality"), allowing a certain freedom, so to speak, from the real

struggle for union taking place within the adolescent; creative activity, which is possible because of the adolescent's intense impulse to create and to be active. Creative activity is secure for him because he is not as vulnerable when confronted with things as when confronted with people.

Since adolescents tend to seek union by escaping from separateness, it is probable that, initially at least, their capacity for loving, which Fromm claims is the fundamental answer to the problem of human isolation, exists only potentially. Love is a characteristic of maturity, and like other characteristics of maturity, it is actualized through a gradual developmental process. A theory which postulates that the adolescent is initially incapable of love and only gradually does he develop a capacity for it, harmonizes with the basic themes in this chapter. The adolescent sexual experience is initially physical and subjective in nature, and not until late adolescence does he tend to combine sexuality with a genuine caring relationship. His relationship with peers is based upon a need to receive rather than upon the desire to give and to be receptive; his social consciousness is subjective and based upon his self-interest rather than upon a true sense of reciprocation.

If love is the expression of union, and if adolescents are essentially incapable of loving, then they are incapable of acting positively in the quest of union. If love requires maturity, then the step toward ultimate union with the Sacred can be taken only by one who has achieved a certain measure of maturity. The inability of the adolescent to actualize his need for union probably accounts in some measure

for the sense of frustration, depression and loneliness which often characterizes the adolescent years.

With gradual maturity adolescents become increasingly more aware of their ultimate aloneness; they also come to recognize that in their lifetime they may never achieve a complete and lasting union. They have various means of coping with this awareness. They may continue to seek refuge in drugs or sex or the "herd mentality", often knowing that refuge is not the answer to their problem of aloneness, but not knowing how else to cope with the problem. They often throw themselves with passion and intensity into their current interests, professing the meaninglessness of everything except the "now". They may latch onto a nihilistic philosophy, claiming that nothing makes sense, or a pantheistic attitude, claiming that union with the ultimate is contained in oneness with nature.

For the adolescent, "love" is an ephemeral term, connoting general good-will and feelings of generosity. He does not usually consider it, in its essential sense, as the most important component of union. Therefore, the adolescent is not only essentially incapable of being open to union with other people through the act of love, he is also, to a great extent, unaware of the essential meaning of love. Therefore, he is likewise largely incapable of understanding in an experiential sense the ultimate act of love--union with the Sacred.

Conclusion

Adolescence is generally considered to be the developmental period

between childhood and adulthood, beginning at puberty and ending when one is capable of assuming complete responsibility for oneself. The most obvious characteristic of adolescence is a sharp increase in physical growth, accompanied by the appearance of the primary and secondary sexual characteristics.

In Western society, adolescence is a period of gradual psychosocial growth which takes place over a duration of several years. In its early stages, adolescence is characterized by decreasing dependence upon parents for emotional support, an increased reliance upon friendship with peers, a powerful egocentric attraction to sex, and an increased capacity for abstract thought. Late adolescence is characterized by a decreased egocentrism, a correspondingly increased sense of social responsibility and a tendency to integrate genuine concern with the sex drive.

To be understood in its most essential sense, adolescence must be regarded in light of a person's total development. The attitudes and behaviours which characterize a person at any given stage of his development are merely manifestations of his deepest characteristic: the desire for union, which finds its expression in the act of love, the perfection of which exists in relationship with the Sacred. The most outstanding characteristic of adolescence--the desire for personal relationships, especially of a sexual nature (at first self-centeredness)--reveals the deep need of the person at this stage to achieve union through love. Because love is essentially characterized by self-giving, the adolescent's narcissistic personality prevents him from discovering the reality of

union. Instead, he seeks various means to escape from separateness. With the increased maturity of late adolescence, however, he gradually becomes capable of loving.

The foregoing concepts of adolescence contain important implications regarding the adolescent's relationship with the Sacred. These will be dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ADOLESCENT RELIGIOSITY

It has so far been established that man's religious nature is an existential fact, that the basic characteristics of man exist at every stage of his development, and that one of man's basic characteristics is the need for union, the perfection of which lies in union with the Sacred. Since religion denotes the relationship between man and the Sacred, then it is within man's religious nature to approach the reality of union. It has been further noted that the relationship between man and the Sacred is shaped by the particular culture and period of history in which each person lives.

This chapter will explore the religious nature of adolescence, as manifested by the characteristics of this period of development within contemporary Western culture. Adolescent religous experience will be discussed, and a theoretical study will be made of adolescent religious attitudes. Because one of the great problems in contemporary society is alienation, the antithesis of union, an attempt will be made to discover how this phenomenon is affecting the religiosity of today's adolescents.

Because adolescence is essentially a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, religiosity during this period is also in a transition state, passing from the blind belief and naiveté of childhood to adult beliefs and convictions. Because adolescence is by nature a period of flux and fluidity, so is the religiosity reflected during this

period--sometimes manifesting a regression to childhood, sometimes revealing astounding maturity, but usually reflective of the gradual dynamic changes taking place in the development from immaturity to maturity.

Some Common Adolescent Attitudes Toward Religion

One problem encountered when discussing the concept of religion, at all stages of development, is the narrow connotation which the concept "religion" has popularly been given in Western society. "Religion" is usually linked with "church", which often is laden with overtones of puritanical morality, clearcut rules, expectations of behaviour, and boring solemnity. It is considered to be something confining rather than freeing, something passive and unrelated to real life rather than an active exploration into the heart of life. A common notion is that one "gets" religion by "going to church". The adolescent concept of religion is commonly inherited from society; therefore, it is difficult to determine the religious nature of the adolescent in its pure state, since he is integrally affected by the society in which he lives. Indeed, it is impossible to completely separate the adolescent's concept of religion from the nature of religion itself, especially when one is speaking of religion as it is being lived within the adolescent's frame of reference.

At the onset of adolescence, the decreasing interest in what is conceived to be religion can be somewhat accounted for by the adolescent's paradoxical combination of energy and lethargy. During his periods of

energy, the adolescent may tend to find religion dull and uninteresting; his energetic spurts result in physical activities unrelated to thought or reflection. During his lethargic periods, too, he may find religion boring because it does not give him passive enjoyment.

During early adolescence "religion" is seen as belonging to the world of parents; this is understandable, considering most of what has been learned about religion comes from parents or parent-figures. The early adolescent perceives himself as becoming independent of his parents and he begins to question everything that characterizes their world. He begins to build his own world, in which peers figure very highly. He seeks approval for his actions and behaviour from his peers. The intellectual development of the early adolescent is far from the stage of mature discrimination: therefore, independence often takes the form of complete (although temporary) rejection of everything that their parents deem important. Frequently it takes the form of thoughtless rebellion rather than the reflective questioning characteristic of the more mature mind. Ausubel (1954, p. 271) speaks of "displaced aggression" toward parents which the adolescent directs against any authority. Religion, or the Church, traditionally taught as authority par excellence, is a prime target for such displaced aggression.

It happens, however, that sometimes an early adolescent will become intensely "religious" in that he follows ritualistic practices scrupulously and develops a highly rigorous and judgemental moral code. Such behaviour may be understood as the opposite side of the same coin, because, in many regards, the early adolescent is intellectually unable

to differentiate between what is important and what is merely peripheral in terms of religious practices. An adolescent who acts in this way is possibly one for whom peer friendships have proven unsatisfactory or non-existent; he is perhaps fearful of the many changes occurring in his life and clings to what seems to be a source of strength and security, or perhaps he has formed a "crush" on a religiously-oriented adult whom he desires to please. Such intensely "religious" behaviour is probably more common among girls than boys, since women tend to be more overtly religious than men (cf. Allport, 1950, p. 41).

As a person moves into late adolescence, he sees the discrepancies between "religion" as it is preached in churches and as it is manifested in the lives of many who profess it. A more reflective and formal thought process is at work within him now, and he has less tendency toward outright rebellion. However, there remains a tendency to reject organized religion because some of its adherents do not practise what they profess.

The late adolescent's perception in many respects is still highly subjective: he often claims that religion is an individual matter, subject to his own personal likes and dislikes. Having emerged somewhat from dependence upon his peer group, the late adolescent begins to synthesize what he considers to be matters of importance and to develop a personal philosophy. Because concepts related to the ultimate meaning of life are new to the adolescent, this period is a time of experimentation in this regard. Insofar as the Church has traditionally concerned itself with the ultimate meaning of life, it necessarily enters somewhat

into the experimentation.

Spurred by his growing concern for social justice, the late adolescent may tend to see religion as a vehicle for helping others, and he may criticize the Church for failing to aid people in need. Because of his idealism and the lack of sophisticated differentiation in his reasoning process, he tends to embrace platitudes. "Love" is one outstanding platitude currently in vogue. "Love" should be the guiding principle, today's adolescents claim, and they often make verbal attacks on the Church for its failure to propagate the principle of love. Only gradually do they learn that love, like any ideal, always falls short of perfection in human institutions, and only gradually do they learn to approach this problem positively (that is, in terms of the possibility of making a constructive contribution) rather than negatively.

Some Studies of Adolescent Values Related to Religion

Havighurst and Keating (1971) point out many problems related to measuring religious commitment. They quote Bealer and Willets (1967) as stating that although most research uses church attendance as the measure of religious behaviour, this is an unsatisfactory indicator of religiosity. However, since the popular notion of religion is so strongly linked with institutional religion, a person's experience of the Church is probably one indicator of the overt meaning of "religion" in his life. Therefore, it seems fitting to include here the findings of some studies which have sought to discover the predominant religious values of adolescents. Except where indicated otherwise, the following

studies were all conducted in the United States.

Bealer and Willets (1967) discovered that adolescents' concern for the religious sphere of life was greater than adults might consider, although within this wider are of interest the main concerns are their own personal relationships. They also discovered a conservatism in adolescent religious beliefs, with a tendency to accept their parents' religious values.

Strommen's research (1963) of a cross-section of Lutheran adolescents revealed that specific religious values are not as important to adolescents as values related to social acceptance and health. His findings indicate that churches with medium-sized congregations have greater positive influence on youth than larger or smaller congregations. Strommen attributes this to a feeling of communal involvement in those congregations which are large enough to obtain sufficient numbers of concerned adults to work with youth, and small enough to offer a sense of belonging. Strommen's study also affirmed what many other studies have revealed: that there is little relationship between religious knowledge and moral values. However, there is a positive relationship between moral behaviour and dedication to religious practices.

Loukes (1961) carried out his study among fourteen-year-olds in Britain. His findings indicate that adolescents take religion seriously and accept traditional language and symbolism more than would be expected, and that they are somewhat uneasy about their values and place in life.

Cole and Hall (1970) quote findings from a study of high school

students in Los Angeles, which indicate that a majority attended church and that forty-one per cent of these attended for the purpose of honouring or learning more about God. The vast majority of those who did not attend church said they "believed in religion" and the reason they did not attend church was work or lack of transportation.

Allport's findings (1950) among college students indicated that the majority felt a need for religion in their lives, but only twenty-five per cent of these had a traditional orthodox view of religion, and forty per cent rejected the church in which they were reared.

The discrepancy between Allport's findings and the other findings mentioned above is probably accounted for by the select sample employed in Allport's study, first of all because college students are not at all representative of adolescents in general, and secondly because Allport's sample consisted of Harvard and Radcliffe students, who are probably not even representative of college students in general.

However, all of these findings indicate a common tendency in the adolescent view of religion: adolescents have a definite orientation toward religion, however defined, and they consider it an important and serious aspect of their lives. For adolescents, religion is strongly bound up with self-identity; the results of these studies emphasize the fact of adolescent egocentrism, and indicate that during the adolescent period religiosity is apparently more self-centered than Other-centered. Another indication from these studies is the importance of a sense of community at this stage, and the need for adult models with whom adolescents can identify. The former emphasizes the need for

friendship and group-belonging in the search for union; the latter will be discussed later.

Kuhlen and Arnold (1944) suggest that during the adolescent years religious beliefs become more abstract and less ritualistic. "God" becomes, for many adolescents, an indefinable power rather than merely a corporeal being.

Deconchy (1965) distinguishes three phases in the development of the idea of God from studies he made of children and adolescents in denominational schools in western Europe. The first is the phase of attributivity, which characterizes children up to pre-adolescence. During this phase the child thinks of God in terms of objective attributes (attributes of infinity such as omniscience), subjective attributes (moral qualities such as justice) and affective attributes (such as beauty and strength). The latter set of attributes leads to the second phase, personalization, which characterizes the pre- and early adolescent, in which God is thought of in personal terms, such as "Father". The third phase, interiorization, is reached toward the mid-teens, during which God is thought of in terms of subjective attitudes--love, trust, doubt, fear--which suggest a growing sense of relationship with the Sacred. Deconchy's research does not extend beyond age sixteen, so little is known about the development of the interiorization phase into late adolescence and maturity.

Vergote (1969) discusses enquiries carried out among Belgian adolescents. These enquiries reveal two striking adolescent characteristics which overflow into the area of religion. (1) The quality

adolescents appreciate most in God is understanding; it is also the quality they appreciate most in a friend. This emphasizes both the importance of friendship and the self-oriented notion of God at this stage; the adolescent formulates a personal idea of God in terms of his own needs and desires. (2) The idealism which characterizes the adolescent is reflected in his idealization of God as the perfect being; Vergote says, "he (God) becomes the ego's absolute (1969, p. 294)."

Havighurst and Keating (1971) make several generalizations about the adolescent view of religion, based on the results of several studies. The most pertinent of these are as follows: (1) adolescents are concerned about religion; (2) they reflect the religious values of adults, especially their parents; (3) their world of concerns tends to be narrow and limited; (4) religious knowledge and activities have little relationship with their day-to-day experiences.

It appears from the foregoing studies that adolescents possess definite interest in forming a relationship with the Sacred; the manner in which this relationship happens depends largely on parental influence and the religious atmosphere of the home. The adolescent's relationship with the Sacred often takes a form similar to that of friendship: the Sacred is considered to be a person, the ideal friend. The adolescent considers the Sacred as existing for him; that is, he tends not to view the Sacred objectively, but rather in terms of his own relationship with the Sacred.

The Relationship Between Adolescent Sexuality and Adolescent Religiosity

The importance of sexuality in the total life experience of the

adolescent has already been noted. Until the onset of puberty, sexuality is latent--that is, the child is only vaguely and indirectly conscious of sex; it is not of primary importance to him, nor does it have an intense experiential base. As the primary and secondary sexual characteristics begin to mature, however, he becomes aware of the integral role of sex in his own life. It is not only a physical phenomenon, but it is integrally woven with his self-identity (his sense of personhood is made more complex by his increasing sense of maleness or femaleness), with his peer relationships (for example, the male adolescent becomes sensitive to the difference between his role vis-a-vis other males and his role vis-a-vis females) and with his anticipated role in society, that is, the expectations placed on him by virtue of his sex.

Because of the adolescent's comparatively sudden experiential realization of his sexuality, and because he finds himself acting and reacting not as a neutral person but as a male or a female, his sexuality dominates every area of his life (this is one manifestation of the state of imbalance which characterizes adolescence). The area of religiosity is greatly influenced by sexual drive, just as are the other areas in the adolescent's life.

It has already been established that man, throughout every stage of development, has a deep desire to complete himself, to achieve union. He is constantly seeking means to complete himself; the means he takes in his search for union usually are consonant with his particular stage of development, and they are manifestations of his deep yearning for union. At the adolescent stage, sexuality is an obvious means to achieve

union, since it is a new and powerful experience, and since, in itself, it is a natural drive toward union. Sexuality, therefore, is not merely a physical phenomenon which is in itself essential to human life, but is a phenomenon which bears deep significance in its revelation of man's desire to complete himself. That is, it is largely by means of sexuality that the adolescent strives for union.

It has been further established that man's desire for union is perfected in union with the Sacred, and the nature of religion is such that the search for union is most effectively sought in the realm of religiosity. A child is somewhat aware of an incompleteness within him and seeks union in various avenues of security; when he reaches adolescence he finds himself abandoning his major source of security and he begins to seek union in various other forms, the most common being conformity to his peer group. At the same time, his sexual drive is awakening and opening to him the possibility of union through sexual fusion. All the while there is within him the increasing awareness of a transcendence in his life.

Several implications emerge from the relationship between adolescent sexuality and religiosity: (1) the religiosity manifested in sexuality tends to spring from the adolescent's biological make-up, since sexuality is basically a biological experience (Mitchell, 1971, p. 15). This suggests that the religious nature of the adolescent may be somewhat akin to that of primitive man, and helps explain the tendency among certain adolescents toward pantheism (Vergote, 1969, p. 294). For them, a feeling of oneness with nature can be mistaken for a feeling of oneness

with the Sacred, or it may, in fact, be a genuine step toward union with the Sacred. (2) The sexual instinct is accompanied at adolescence by "affective narcissism" (Arnold, 1960, p. 243; Vergote, 1969, p. 294) which leads to an indiscriminate idealization of someone who is significant in the adolescent's life. This idealization tends to permeate the adolescent's religiosity; he perceives the Sacred to be "the pure and perfect being ... the ideal person in whom to confide (Vergote, 1969, p. 294)." (3) Because adolescence can be viewed as basically a biological stage in development (Mitchell, 1971, p. 19), meaningful experiences tend to be physical and concrete. Immediate sensory experiences are more exciting than abstract ideas; therefore, the adolescent's sense of the Sacred is inextricably bound up in the physical world. This may constitute another reason for pantheistic tendencies during this period.

It must be remembered, however, that adolescent characteristics are neither absolute nor static. The process from early adolescence to maturity is a fluid one. There are great differences between one adolescent and another, and numerous differences exist within the same person between the beginning and the end of adolescence. Adolescence, by definition, implies growth and transition.

Adolescent Religious Experience

An experience marks the point of a person's contact with the world outside himself; it is the subjective awareness and integration of an objective reality. "Religious experience", in its basic form, denotes a subjective awareness of an object which is transcendent; it is

a direct, first-hand experience. Because of its subjectivity, religious experience is difficult to classify or categorize. Nevertheless, in order to assess adolescent capacity for religious experience, it is necessary to explore the question: what is the nature of adolescent religious experience?

This thesis maintains that adolescents are capable of religious experience, for at least two reasons: (1) religious experience is rooted in affectivity, and thus to a certain extent is within the adolescent's grasp; (2) evidence reveals that adolescents are not indifferent to religious matters; on the contrary, they reveal a definite concern for this area of their lives.

Three aspects of adolescent religious experience can be isolated, each of which is related to the others: (1) a sense of sin; (2) a sense of helplessness and need for the Sacred; and, (3) conversion.

(1) A sense of sin. The classical Christian notion of sin has been briefly discussed in Chapter Three. It denotes alienation of oneself from the Sacred. To recognize this tendency in oneself--to be aware that in one's life there are occasions in which one attempts to fulfill the desire for union with one's own resources rather than seeking union with the Sacred--is to have a sense of sin. Vergote (1969) refers to it as "religious guilt". Guilt, apart from the religious dimension, is a psychological phenomenon which "has very little real religious value (Vergote, 1969, p. 190)." Guilt is rooted, according to Vergote, in taboos, in which "guilt shows itself as an instinctive fear of something one feels to be a menace to vital values (p. 190)" and narcissism, which

is wounded when one performs an action not in accord with one's ideal image. Because the Sacred can be conceived in terms of one's ideal self-image, the guilt experienced when one does not measure up to one's self-image can be mistakenly thought of as sin against the Sacred.

From studies conducted among adolescents, Vergote (1969) concludes that most adolescent guilt is narcissistic and social: the ideal self-image has been broken and has damaged one's social relationships. In such guilt there is very little sense of sin--the adolescent has merely disappointed himself and perhaps others, but is unaware of whether of not he is alienated from the Sacred--even though in an effort to assuage his guilt the adolescent may intensify his religious practice.

Babin (1965) claims that a sense of sin, as it has been described above, is part of the adolescent experience, but probably does not become central until late adolescence. He says, "It is striking to see that, whenever young people around the age of twenty go through the crisis of conversion, their openness to God nearly always goes hand in hand with a recognition of their pride, vanity and selfishness (p. 51)." This emphasizes not only that adolescents--especially late adolescents--are capable of experiencing a sense of sin, but also that a sense of sin co-exists with a sense of the Sacred. This is what nearly all religious writers claim: that one cannot achieve union with the Sacred unless one is aware of his ability to alienate himself from the Sacred.

> Kierkegaard stressed the religious need of the negative awareness of sin. Only through negation can a genuine, that is, a dialectical relation with God be established. Consciousness of sin is considered to be a permanent feature of the religious attitude. (Dupre, 1972, p. 430.)

(2) A sense of helplessness and need for the Sacred. If a person has a sense of his ability to alienate himself from the Sacred, thus cutting himself off from the source of union, he tends toward a sense of total helplessness. This feeling of helplessness can lead either to despair or to a sense of complete dependence upon the Sacred in order to achieve union. The adolescent experiences failure and helplessness no less than other human beings, and is probably particularly sensitive to this experience:

> The adult, already "scorched" by experience, has managed to surround himself with a network of security; but the adolescent, not yet on firm ground but already emerging from the boundless dreams of his fifteen years, comes up against failure: failure of his ideas, his dreams and aspirations, the experience of an inhuman world, a burning awareness of his own moral weakness and sinfulness (Babin, 1965, p. 51).

Babin claims, furthermore, that the adolescent often feels a powerful need for help from the Sacred. To what extent this feeling co-exists with a conscious desire for union with the Sacred is difficult to assess. It seems certain, however, that with the feeling of helplessness exists at least potentially the desire for the Sacred, and therein lies the germ of religious experience.

(3) Conversion. In its root meaning, "conversion" denotes complete turning; it was discussed briefly in Chapter Two as referring to a person's definitive turning toward the Sacred, choosing to commit his life to the Sacred. Babin (1965) describes it as

> ... the act or event in which the young person gives his life a direction and meaning in relation to transcendent values, with a depth of consciousness and decision that put an end to the vacillations of his adolescence and profoundly affect the moral and religious sense of his adult life (p. 60).

For most people, the conversion experience is gradual (Babin refers to it as "implicit conversion"). Allport (1950) states that seventy-one per cent of his subjects reported a gradual conversion, not based on any one intense experience.

The typical age of conversion is a subject of controversy, and opinions vary as to the stage in life where conversion is most likely to occur. Bernard (1957) suggests that early and middle adulthood is the time when one is most likely to be "converted", since by then one has passed through the crises of selecting a mate, preparing for a vocation, and becoming a parent, and is now inclined to consider matters of value and religion. Allport's study was conducted among college students, who reported their own gradual conversions; he suggests that the conversion experience is possible during adolescence. Clark (1971) suggests that a turning point (conversion) can occur at any age.

Babin gives four characteristics of the conversion of youth. (a) The desire for happiness seems more important than the desire for truth. Babin distinguishes between the act of the intellect and the act of the will--the adolescent turning to the Sacred is an act of the will (seeking goodness for himself) rather than an act of the intellect (seeking truth) because of the adolescent's subjectivity and his tendency to focus on himself rather than on the Sacred. (b) The adolescent does not differentiate in his religious beliefs. He considers the Sacred as an absolute Reality on whom he can base his security--his attitude is one of wholesale trust--and he is not concerned about details. (c) The adolescent recognizes his sinfulness and desires to

change his life. (d) One's way of life begins to assume definite direction.

Again distinguishing between intellect and will, Babin says that gradual, or implicit, conversion can be weak in one of these two areas: it is possible for adolescents to take a strong emotional stand, without adequate reflection of the intellect, or they may have a firm intellectual grasp but be unable to make a strong emotional commitment.

As a conclusion to this section, an attempt will be made to assess adolescent religious experience in the light of the three signs of religious experience discussed in Chapter Two. (1) The adolescent is capable of seeing the manifestation of the Sacred, but only in a limited manner; his attraction is essentially affective and subjective; ultimate truth becomes of concern only with increased maturity; (2) it is possible that once having experienced the Sacred, the adolescent will desire a continued manifestation, but his choices in this regard are more influenced by affectivity than by intellect; therefore, they will be subject to shift and change, and greater depth of commitment will come only with greater maturity; (3) it is possible for the adolescent to experience peace and joy in the presence of the Sacred, but this will probably not be a constant state with him because his nature is too volatile and his biological stirrings too powerful. His maturing intellect will frequently clash with those convictions based primarily on emotions. Only when his intellect and affectivity come into greater harmony with each other will he be capable of mature commitment consonant with his religious experience.

Adolescent Religious Attitudes

As discussed in Chapter Two, an attitude is an act of the intellect giving assent to an affective movement, or experience. Concerning adolescent attitudes, Crow and Crow (1956) state:

> Attitudes expressed by an adolescent of any age reflect the effect of environmental influences upon his inner urges and his acquired interests. A young person's developing ideals represent the goals or life values he is attempting to build for himself. They have their origin in his gradually habituated attitudes toward self, self and others, religion, and morality. The functioning of these attitudes in his daily experiences characterizes the actualization of whatever life values the adolescent is struggling to achieve. (p. 358).

This suggests that adolescent attitudes are formed through three interrelated processes: (1) inner drives (resulting from biological pressures), (2) habitual experiences which have become incorporated into his personality, and, (3) various day-to-day experiences of the world outside himself. His attitudes determine his values, and his values in turn determine his life choices. Therefore, the commitments made by an adolescent are a chain result of his experiences, his attitudes and his values.

Research findings quoted by Cole and Hall (1969) show that adolescents consistently reflect the attitudes, including religious attitudes, of their elders, especially parents. Other studies (notably those done by Babin, 1965) point to the importance of outside influences, such as the mass media and university-level philosophy and science courses. It appears that the adolescent is influenced in this area by things or persons he perceives to be greater than himself, and the greatest influence on him is that which seems to be the most desirable,

or most valuable to him.

Identification is one of the most powerful influences in the formation of adolescent attitudes. Identification is an association of oneself with another person or group of persons, whose qualities and characteristics become one's own. It is more than a behavioral phenomenon; identification implies the assuming of the attitudes as well as the behaviour of another. It is easy to see why identification, at this stage of idealism, can be so powerful. The person identified with is virtually idealized to the point of "hero worship" among early adolescents, who emphasize glamor and physical beauty. In late adolescence, the idealization concerns itself more with inner personal qualities than with superficial attributes.

Crow and Crow (1956) claim that "one of the most significant factors of influence upon an adolescent's religious attitudes is the religious atmosphere of the home (p. 372)." The influence can be both direct and counter-direct. A possible example of the latter is in a home where religious tenets are very rigid and where many taboos exist which set the adolescent apart from his peers. The adolescent, faced with a tension between parental strictness and peer liberalism, is likely to reject his parents' attitudes completely unless he has internalized them and found them more rewarding than those of his peers. Contrariwise, an adolescent who has received no religious values at home may seek the security offered by the religious attitude of a friend or an adult whom he admires.

Babin (1965) claims that a turning point in the formation of

religious attitudes is reached during late adolescence. Intellectual maturation combines with a calming of instinctual drives, and personal attitude becomes more clearly defined. During this maturational process there is "a triple rhythm, like waves that overlap" (p. 101): a sense of insecurity that is now heightened because the adolescent becomes intellectually aware of it; reflection on the meaning and purpose of his life; and choice which leads to commitment.

In Chapter Two the four means of attitude formation, as set down by Allport, were discussed with particular reference to religious attitudes. It is possible to discuss these means specifically in terms of the formation of adolescent religious attitudes.

(1) A religious attitude can be formed by the unifying effect of many similar religious experiences. In order for an attitude to be formed in this way, the experiences must have a unifying effect on the adolescent's affectivity--that is, his emotional reactions to the experiences must be harmonious with each other. Otherwise, with intellectual maturity and increased ability for differentiation, the experiences will produce discord, and the result will be doubt and possible rejection.

(2) A religious attitude can be formed by a differentiation of experiences, which promotes conscious discrimination. The adolescent's power of intellectual differentiation, though decreasing, is not as yet fully mature, and he tends to be indiscriminate in terms of experience. That is, the adolescent tendency is either to give all religious experiences equal value and merit, or to repress or deny those experiences which do not jibe with the main stream of experience. Therefore, an

attitude formed in this way possibly will contribute to adult disequilibrium.

(3) A religious attitude can be formed by the intensity of a single religious experience. Studies show that an irrevocable attitude formed as a result of a sudden conversion happens in only a minority of cases. Writers in this area, however, tend to caution against underestimating the intensity of the adolescent period and the possible lasting effect of a single intense religious experience.

(4) A religious attitude can be formed by assuming the religious beliefs one identifies with. This kind of attitude formation is based on modelling rather than original experience. The majority of adolescent religious attitudes are probably formed in this way. The question at this point is: with whom do adolescents most identify? One adolescent identification is with peers, but it is doubtful whether the peer group itself completely establishes standards, attitudes and behaviours. There must be a "first cause", or more precisely, a number of influences which, when combined, form the standard or norm to which the peer group accommodates itself. Most research suggests the primacy of home influence. But it is inevitable that the larger environment is also influential to some extent. Ultimately, the criterion becomes this: whatever the adolescent values highest is what he will identify with. This makes the problem cyclical: at the beginning of this section it was stated that experiences lead to attitudes, which determine values; in turn, values determine those attitudes which are formed by means of identification.

In the conclusion of his chapter on religious attitudes, Vergote

(1969) states quite categorically:

> The religious attitude, as the structuring of the whole personality in harmony with the relationship with God, supposes an inner liberty of which man is hardly capable before adulthood. For this he must have resolved the affective confusion which is betrayed in impassioned religious transports (p. 245).

Alienation as a Factor in Adolescent Religiosity

An increasing problem among contemporary adolescents in Western society is the problem of alienation. It is a condition common to adolescents--indeed, common to man--throughout history. The history of Western man up to the Reformation shows the gradual shaking off of the fetters that bound man to external authority, increasing his sense of aloneness and alienation. The onset of Protestantism, with Luther as its spokesman, ushered in the notion of total submission to God, the all-powerful deus ex machina. The rise of industrialism and capitalism (and in this century, the rise of technology), have bred the conviction that the economic machine is of prime importance, and man himself is important only insofar as he contributes to it. In a computerized, push-button age, alienation seems to be acutely characteristic of the individual person. Fromm (1962) describes the phenomenon thus:

> (the person) has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of his world, as the creator of his acts--but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys (p. 56).

Dupré (1972) speaks of alienation as being part of the religious attitude: man is estranged from himself, Dupré says, because he is estranged from the Sacred. He says further, "I suspect that it is

primarily his strong feeling of alienation which, despite an increasing secularization, keeps contemporary man intrigued by the religious interpretation of existence (pp. 419-420)." The feeling of alienation is not religious in itself, although it is necessary for religious experience. It is bound up very closely with the "sense of sin", discussed in the previous section, and contains also the feeling of powerlessness and helplessness necessary for a sense of the Sacred. Alienation becomes overtly religious when one is aware of one's estrangement from the Sacred and aware that only in acknowledging his helplessness and striving for union with the Sacred will be become capable of overcoming his sense of alienation.

Because of the adolescent's vulnerability to changing societal conditions, it is inevitable that he be affected by the increasing sense of alienation which pervades Western society. In many respects adolescence, by its very nature, is a period of alienation. It is a transitional state, beyond the security of childhood but still outside the world of adulthood and maturity. Adolescence lends itself to a state of helplessness and confusion. Today, when advances in thought and in science are being made so rapidly and when seemingly important and meaningful things are becoming irrelevant, the adolescent experiences not only alienation in his shift from the world of childhood to that of adulthood, but also a sense of his own seeming inconsequence in the face of technology.

Adolescent alienation seems to stem, in part, from an increased capacity for intellectual activity, which takes place within an egocentric

personality. The adolescent is beginning to think abstractly and reason things out, but he is unable to precisely differentiate the concepts of others from his own. He is likewise unable to objectively understand those points of view which contradict his own. The disharmony between his intellectual maturation and his surging emotions leads to confusion and an inability to understand himself. Yet he is led by the combination of intelligence andegocentrism to explore his inner self, and he begins to discover himself in relation to the outside world. This is an extremely important experience. Not only is he undergoing the tensions of security vs. insecurity, acceptance vs. rejection, worth vs. worthlessness in his interaction with his inner self; he is also faced with the fact that his values may be at odds with society's. He values himself as self, whereas the main stream of society values him more as a contributor to its own interests.

The adolescent's desire for friendship is a reaction against the alienated state in which he finds himself. Friendship for the adolescent can be understood as a step which he takes toward "union". Being unable to achieve union within himself, and finding the outside world alien, the adolescent grasps at those people closest to him--his peers. The union sought in this relationship is illusory, or at least superficial, unless it leads the adolescent to an awareness of the possibility for deeper union. Unless this happens--that is, unless the adolescent is led to an acknowledgement and desire for deeper union--his sense of alienation will increase and its religious dimension, the sense of the Sacred, will diminish. His deep desire and capacity for union will

remain a void and he will seek to escape from the emptiness inside him in sexual fusion (or a substitute for sexual fusion, such as drug use), in anonymity through total conformity to society or a group within society, or in work and activity. His increasing capacity for love will become encrusted with these superficial means of escape, and it will become increasingly difficult for him to allow a sense of longing for the Sacred to penetrate deeply enough for true union to take place.

Yet there is an increasing number of adolescents consciously seeking religion in order to discover a sense of integrity within themselves. This search is taking place among late adolescents particularly. As they approach maturity, they begin to be cognisant of the fragmentation taking place within them. That is, they begin to realize that although an equilibrium is being achieved between their emotions and their reason, there remains a basic lack of unity within them. During late adolescence the outside world is frequently perceived as intensifying disunity rather than acting as a unifying agent; thus, in addition to the alienation native to them, adolescents discover in their environment factors which alienate them still further. For instance, society places heavy demands upon adolescents in terms of economic prosperity and "upstanding" behaviour, yet such demands tend to aggravate the disunited elements within them because they are confining and restricting. Such demands do not allow the freedom required to search for true sources of union. It is only with great difficulty that an adolescent can break loose from the confines of societal pressures and seek the Sacred within the liberty of his own person. The rebellion which many late-adolescents

feel rising within them is against these elements in society which foster self-alienation.

Religion is being increasingly sought as a means of overcoming alienation and, at least unconsciously, achieving union. Religion has always been considered the seat of security, but "organized religion" is filling this role less so today, partly because its complex organization emphasizes the alienation of the individual person, and partly because the security it offers is not deep-rooted enough to be a unifying factor in individual lives. Christianity has seemingly failed in this regard. In the institutionalization process, the pristine elements of Christianity have been somewhat clouded over and the direct influence of Christ has in large measure been lost. Vergote gives evidence of this in citing research carried out among Catholics concerning religious influences on their lives. Rarely, he says, do they mention Christ, and "only to a relatively restricted number is he a really visible sign of God (1969, p. 213)."

It is difficult to predict the future of religion and the nature of its influence on adolescents, since the religious crisis faced by contemporary society is historically novel in many respects. Some people predict a "religious revolution" comparable to the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. It certainly seems evident that religion is achieving a new type of importance in society, and that adolescents are not at all immune to it. More important, it seems evident that adolescents have within them, as part of their very nature, the latent ability to combine their sense of alienation with a sense of their need for the

Sacred and thus take a step toward ultimate union.

Conclusion

Although "religion" may have a pejorative connotation to some adolescents, research shows that adolescents are explicitly concerned with religious matters. In general, it appears that an interest in religion increases with intellectual maturation. Throughout the span of adolescence, the basis of religiosity gradually develops from affectivity to a combination of affective and intellectual activity, although a harmonious balance is reached only in maturity. For the adolescent, the Sacred is primarily a means of helping him discover himself, an ideal friend to whom he can relate and with whom he can identify. For the adolescent, the Sacred is not an objective Other.

The adolescent strives for union with the Sacred by the implicit means of his sexuality. He experiences a break from his initial source of union, his parents, and seeks to fulfill his deep desire for union by means of this new source which is now opening up to him. Thus religiosity tends to have biological and emotional roots.

Adolescent religious experience is weighted on the side of subjectivity and affectivity, and although it can form the basis for a later religious commitment, after maturity is reached, any immediate commitments are likely to be short-lived. The religious attitudes of adolescents are largely a reflection of their parents' attitudes and result from the values they have assumed from their total environment.

Alienation is a crucial factor in adolescent religiosity.

Alienation denotes a sense of estrangement which becomes acute during the adolescent period and as such it can be the means whereby the adolescent either turns to the Sacred for fulfillment or turns away from the Sacred in an attempt to find fulfillment by his own efforts. In contemporary society, indications are that increasing numbers of adolescents are turning toward the Sacred.

In summary, four points should be emphasized in considering adolescent religious characteristics: (1) since adolescent search for union is indirectly manifested in the strength of the sexual drive, adolescent religiosity is very closely linked with sexuality. To this extent, its roots are biological and affective. (2) Intellectual growth is also a significant factor in adolescent religiosity, since religious growth is directly related to intellectual maturation. With increased maturity comes an increase in ability to differentiate and to base one's beliefs on intellectual, rather than affective, foundations. (3) Adolescents are greatly influenced by the values of their parents. Although in general they reflect their parents' religious attitudes, they identify with whatever they deem to be most valuable in their lives. (4) Religion and self-identity are closely bound together at the adolescent stage, and the Sacred is regarded by the adolescent in terms of his own social needs.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF THREE FICTIONAL ADOLESCENTS

The purpose of this chapter is to substantiate and illustrate the foregoing theory of adolescent religiosity by describing and analyzing adolescent characters taken from novels. Although none of these novels is contemporary in the strict sense, the fundamental traits of the characters going through the developmental period of adolescence, appear to be similar to today's adolescents.

The first character, Alyosha, appears in The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who is considered to be one of the greatest Russian novelists. Completed in the year 1880, The Brothers Karamazov is a novel dealing with the relationships of three brothers with each other, with their father, with mutual acquaintances, and with profound existential problems of life. Each of the brothers, Dmitry, Ivan and Alyosha, has a personality entirely distinct from the other two. Alyosha's personality is distinguished by his youthful innocence and intense idealism. Alyosha, like all of Dostoyevsky's characters, is a product of Western culture by virtue of the strong link between France and Russia during the nineteenth century, when many Russian writers were influenced by French culture.[1] Alyosha seems to have been modelled on St. Aloysius Gonzaga, S. J., a young sixteenth-century saint.

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[1]For example, Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace.

The second character, Franny, appears in J. D. Salinger's Franny and Zooey, a novel originally written as two lengthy short stories, one a sequel to the other. Franny is an American upper-middle-class student whose adolescence spans the latter part of the 1950's. The novel concentrates on a few days in Franny's life, during which she seeks religious experience.

Salinger's writing is centered mainly on youthful characters. Holden, the third character discussed in this chapter, is also from a Salinger novel, The Catcher in the Rye. Holden, like Franny, is an American upper-middle-class adolescent, and The Catcher in the Rye tells of a few days in his life during which he searches for some meaning to the adolescent turmoil he is presently undergoing.

A major premise of this thesis is exemplified in this chapter: that literary artists have a deep grasp on the meaning of the human condition--a meaning which can be particularized across time and space. Specifically, it is assumed that these authors have certain insights into adolescence in general and adolescent religiosity in particular. The extent to which these insights correspond with the foregoing theory is one measure by which the theory can be partially validated.

Alyosha (from The Brothers Karamazov)

Alyosha (or Alexey, which is his formal name) is a boy of nineteen. He is the youngest son of Fyodor Karamazov, a notoriously dissolute character, and the offspring of his second marriage. Alyosha's mother died when he was three years of age. He was brought up by a family of

whom little is said in the novel, except that the father, Mr. Polenov, took full financial responsibility for the upbringing of Alyosha and his brother Ivan; he is spoken of as "one of the most honourable and humane men one is ever likely to meet (p. 13)." Alyosha seems to have lived a happy childhood, clouded only by the dim memory of his mother's death and the gradual knowledge of his father's irresponsible behaviour. Before completing his studies, Alyosha suddenly decides to journey to see his father in order to find his mother's grave. Shortly after finding her grave, he enters a monastery and becomes an ardent disciple of the elder Zossima, who is renowned as a holy man and miracle-worker. On his death-bed, Zossima tells Alyosha that he does not belong in the monastery and instructs him to return to the world. After Zossima's death, Alyosha obeys him.

Alyosha reflects faithfully the idealistic, affection-based religious sentiment commonly observed in the adolescent. He has grown up struggling between two worlds: the world of disorder, confusion and evil, of which his father is the archetype, and the world of security and kindness which he has experienced with the Polenov family. His latter experience has had the stronger influence on him and has thus made the former repulsive to him. When he reaches the point in his life where he knows he must leave the world of childhood, he chooses a way of life consonant with that in which he was brought up. Having abandoned the only security he has ever known, he seeks refuge in the structure and security of the monastery. He rejects his father's way of life not simply because in itself it is repulsive to him, but also

because he feels within himself a strong tendency toward it, and the realization of this makes him fearful. He often reminds himself, "I, too, am a Karamazov", implying that the characteristics which have led his father and oldest brother to lives of sexual depravity are also inherent in him, since he is of the same stock as they. The extent to which such depravity runs in the family is difficult to assess, but what is certain, however, is that Alyosha, in addition to realizing that sexual immorality rules the lives of his father and brother, is experiencing the awakening and arousal of his own natural sexual impulses. Repulsed by the dissolute image of his father, and fearful lest the powerful urges within him shall lead in the same direction, Alyosha channels his sexual energy in the direction of virginal purity. In accordance with a general tendency of adolescence, he tends to perceive extremes rather than balanced, in-between states, and thus chooses a way of life totally opposite to that led by his father. As an additional refuge, he submits himself entirely in obedience to the elder Zossima. This complete handing-over of himself, though done with the emotional fervour of youth, can be understood as a response in his growing relationship with the Sacred: that is, his entrance into the monastic way of life and his submission to Zossima are not merely a blind escape from the anxieties of life, but are a positive step in his religious development. Alyosha's subsequent responses to the Sacred reveal a healthy religious personality, as shall be seen later; therefore, this initial response is not a neurotic response, but merely immature--that is, typically adolescent.

Alyosha's decision to enter the monastery is probably an initial

conversion, sparked by his visit to the grave of his mother. He experiences what Babin calls "the conversion of youth", which is to be distinguished from the conversion of maturity which he later experiences. Having been brought up in an atmosphere of gentleness and compassion, he identifies these qualities with the mother that he remembers only "in a dream (p. 11)." The religious attitude he has acquired through identification is somehow culminated by the intensity of an experience approaching religious experience--the sight of the grave of the person who has symbolized for him all that is most beautiful and most desirable in life. In this experience, and in his immediate decision to enter the monastery, Alyosha displays the four characteristics of youthful conversion, as set down by Babin: (1) he desires his own happiness and goodness rather than truth: it is an act of the will rather than of the intellect. At this stage of his life, Alyosha is "struggling to emerge from the darkness of worldly wickedness to the light of love", and the monastic life is for him "the ideal way of escape (p. 171)." (2) There is virtually no differentiation in Alyosha's belief; he places absolute trust in Zossima who becomes for him a personification of the Sacred. (3) He is aware of sinfulness, especially that of his father; he begins (though still very vaguely) to be aware of the sinfulness within himself (see above quote), and he wants to eradicate it. (4) He makes a decision which channels his life in a definite direction.

In Chapter Four the three elements comprising religious experience were discussed: a sense of sin, a sense of helplessness and a need of the Sacred, and the conversion experience. In Alyosha's life, at

this stage, the conversion aspect predominates. It is because he lacks a profound realization of his own sinfulness and his need for union with the Sacred that his religious experience at this point is immature. He is possibly experiencing a vague sort of guilt--guilt for the sins of his family and for the sins he realizes he is capable of committing--which, as has been stated, has little religious value.

Alyosha's sense of sin, therefore, is, for the most part, exterior, focused more on his father's wickedness than on the danger within himself of becoming alienated from the Sacred. He has experienced little failure during his protected existence, and therefore, has not yet felt a profound need or desire for the Sacred. There is a narrowness and rigidity in his decision, and it is devoid, as yet, of deep religious experience. Alyosha is "yearning for an immediate act of heroism and wishing to sacrifice everything, even life itself, for that act of heroism (p. 26)." He says, "'I want to live for immortality and I won't accept any compromise (p. 26).'" It is an arbitrary decision, perhaps more a function of his rigid, undifferentiating intellect than a free, open act of commitment to the Sacred. "He had arrived in our town looking thoughtful, and perhaps he wished only to see whether to give up all he had or only two roubles--and in the monastery he met this elder ... (p. 27)." Alyosha feels drawn to Zossima, and perhaps there is a quality in Zossima which speaks to him of the Sacred--that is, perhaps his first meeting with Zossima contains the germ of religious experience--but it is not until later that the totality of religious experience takes place in Alyosha's life.

Alyosha's sexual confusion is evident in his first contact as a novice with Lise, the crippled girl whose mother desires a cure for her. While her mother talks with Zossima, Lise plays an eye-game with Alyosha, embarrassing, yet at the same moment, attracting him. He hides behind Zossima's back so as not to see her; this is a symbolic gesture in which he seeks refuge from a sexual attraction behind his symbol of sexual purity and religious fidelity. Alyosha's sexual conflicts are too great for him to cope with explicitly, and he seeks protection from them in purity.

Religious experience occurs for Alyosha after Zossima's death. Having committed himself to the Sacred as symbolized by Zossima, Alyosha's faith and commitment are tested when Zossima's body begins to show signs of decay, contrary to the expectations of his followers, who had predicted with little doubt that his body would remain incorrupt. Alyosha's ideal has been shattered, and he feels that justice (that is, his concept of justice) has been violated. He egocentrically presumes that his concept of Sacred is the absolute concept of Sacred. He thinks that in justice, his symbol of holiness "ought to have been raised above everyone else in the whole world ... (p. 398)." He comes face-to-face with the Sacred in an experience which he can neither understand nor justify. He has reached a point of acute alienation: his emotional commitment to the Sacred has been both shattered by this experience and contradicted by his brother Ivan's reasoned rejection of Christianity. Faced with a broken ideal and an atheistic argument which appeals to his developing intellect, Alyosha becomes confused and unable to understand the meaning

of the Sacred in his life. He echoes Ivan when he cries out, "'I haven't taken up arms against God. I simply don't accept his world (p. 400).'" The union Alyosha sought in his idealization of Zossima has proved illusory; he is unable to find a substitute means of union elsewhere and therefore is forced in upon himself. In reaction against his growing sense of alienation he begins to slip into selfishness and apathy, and willingly allows himself to be led into a situation in which he expects to be seduced by a prostitute. Face-to-face with this woman, he discovers in her a goodness which is lacking in himself; at this point he finally realizes his own profound tendency to sin. "'I'm myself the worst of the men in the dock (p. 417)'", he declares, probing the depths of his own alienation from the Sacred, which heretofore had eluded him. His return to the monastery shortly after this incident denotes his realization of his need for the Sacred, and is a decisive step toward a more mature conversion.

Upon his return to the monastery, Alyosha goes immediately to Zossima's cell where the elder's body is laid out in the coffin. He is "full of obscure feelings," but is "at peace" as he kneels to pray. He is no longer disturbed by the fact that the elder's body is becoming corrupt. As he listens to a gospel passage being read, he ponders the significance of his newly-discovered sinfulness, and he vacillates between desire and fear, idealism and realism, in his realization that he must seek union with the Sacred in order to find fulfillment. The idealistic adolescent in him says, "'And the road--the road is straight, bright, shining like crystal, and the sun is at the end of it (p. 424).'"

The realist, the person who has come face-to-face with his own sinfulness whispers, "'I am afraid--I dare not look (p. 425).'" He hears Zossima's voice, as in a dream, telling him of the Sacred who is merciful toward man, desirous of turning man's water into wine--that is, desirous of achieving union with each person. This is the moment of Alyosha's mature religious conversion.

The combined experiences of Alyosha's visit to the prostitute and his return to the monastery constitute a mature religious experience. It can be said that Alyosha displays the signs of religious experience: (1) he has seen the manifestation of the Sacred in the goodness of the prostitute and in the words (in his dream) of Zossima; (2) he desires a continued manifestation of the Sacred, having intellectually considered the possibility of alienation from the Sacred, to the extent that he wishes the rest of his life to be guided by this desire; and (3) he experiences a peace contrasting with his former feeling of darkness and conflict. The essence of his peace is lasting: "And never, never for the rest of his life could Alyosha forget that moment (p. 427)."

It has been stated in Chapter Four that sexuality is a significant means by which adolescents strive for union. When Alyosha makes his decision to enter the monastery, he is making a choice which is partly sexual in nature: his previous experience with sexuality has been unpleasant, due to the moral evils in which he has seen his father and brother engage. In choosing a chaste way of life he is actually choosing the opposite side of the same coin: instead of seeking union through sexual means (the selfishness that his father and brother have

displayed in their sexual experiences frightens and disgusts him), he seeks union through sexual abstinence. This choice reveals a characteristic inability to clearly distinguish good from evil in a given mode of action: having perceived the negative aspects of sexual experience, he rejects it totally, overlooking its positive elements.

Although rigid and immature in his outlook and only partially cognisant of a transcendent reality in his life, he has taken a step toward union which is fully in accord with his present stage of development. Even at the point of his mature conversion (as distinguished from his adolescent conversion), his reaction to his religious experience is characteristically sexual in nature: he embraces the earth, kisses it, drenches it with his tears, and vows "frenziedly to love it, to love it for ever and ever (p. 426)." He does not equate the earth with the Sacred--in this respect he has matured as a result of a genuine experience of the Sacred--but his biological instincts tell him that by being close to nature he is thereby close to the Sacred. At this point, his emotions override his reason, and his body intensely craves a physical outlet for his emotional energy. This gesture, in which he unites himself to the earth, symbolizes his hunger and desire for union with the Sacred.

Alyosha's religious development runs concurrent with an increased intellectual appreciation of the Sacred, an increased knowledge of the meaning of the Sacred in his own life, and the realization that he must choose between union and alienation when confronted with the Sacred. He has a religious experience, in which the Sacred is manifested

to him, and he responds. As a result of this experience, his religious attitude, which sets the tone of his life, becomes oriented in a definite direction. This happens as he reaches the brink of maturity: that is, his adolescent experiences, although directing and influencing him, are not, ultimately, the deciding factors in his life's choice. The deciding factors are his late-adolescent-early-adult experiences.

Franny (from Franny and Zooey)

Franny is a twenty-year-old college student. In the first part of this book, Franny arrives to visit her boy-friend, Lane, for the week-end on the occasion of a college football game. She speaks and acts strangely, and Lane, afraid that she is sick, discovers that a book called The Way of a Pilgrim has had a great impact on her and seems to be the cause of her strange behaviour. It is the story of a Russian peasant who, having heard the words of Scripture, "pray without ceasing", sets out on a pilgrimage to discover how he can carry out this injunction. He encounters a monk who teaches him how to pray the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me"). Upon reading this book, Franny has become attracted to the Jesus Prayer, which she enthusiastically describes to Lane ("' ... you only have to just do it with your lips at first--then eventually what happens, the prayer becomes self-active. Something happens after awhile. I don't know what, but ... the words get synchronized with the person's heartbeats ... (p. 37)'"). She soon discovers that Lane is not on her wave-length at all. At the conclusion of the first part, she faints on her way to the washroom,

and in the second part of the book we find Franny two days later, sick and pale, lying on the couch in her parents' living room. Her mother, realizing that Franny is undergoing a religious crisis of some sort but not knowing how to help, implores Franny's older brother, Zooey, to talk with her. Zooey tries to show her in several ways that the goodness, or holiness, she seeks in the Jesus Prayer is useless unless she knows who Jesus is and how she can find him in everyday life. In the end, he apparently succeeds in helping her to approach religious maturity, and after several weeks of inner turmoil and worry, she lies "quiet, smiling at the ceiling," and falls into a "deep, dreamless sleep."

Franny, characteristic of many late adolescents, displays evidence of an increased intellectual ability as well as an increased awareness of the imperfections of society and of individual people. However, her powers of differentiation are not yet fully developed; she becomes critical of people, almost to the point of complete negativism. She says, "'I'm sick of just liking people. I wish to God I could meet somebody I could respect ... (p. 20).'" She describes one of her professors as "'... a terribly sad old self-satisfied phony with wild and wooly white hair ... (p. 127).'" Zooey tries to point out to her this characteristic--for him, it is a fault rather than a characteristic of immaturity--and he tries to teach her to be more discriminating: "'If you're going to go to war against the System, just do your shooting like a nice, intelligent girl--because the enemy's <u>there</u>, and not because you don't like his hairdo ... (p. 163).'" Her inability to differentiate essentials from accidentals causes confusion and

contradictions within her. She says, "'everything everybody does is so--I don't know--not wrong, or mean ... just so tiny and meaningless and--sad-making (p. 26).'" And a few pages later, as if trying to see virtue in meaninglessness, she says, "'I'm sick of not having the courage to be an absolute nobody (p. 30).'" Within her narrow frame of reference, Franny appears to be searching for union; however, at the same time she is rebelling against everything which she formerly might have thought--or have been told--were the means of achieving union. She rebels against the intellectual atmosphere of the college because it is meaningless in her life; she rebels against sexual union (although she wavers once or twice, momentarily overcome by guilt feelings), because she seems to realize that Lane is self-centered and does not care for her beyond the fact that she is an object of convenience for him. While dining in a restaurant, she leaves him twice: the first time she goes to the ladies' room, where she cries "for fully five minutes" and then for a moment reads something in The Way of a Pilgrim; the second time, in abrupt response to his "'I love you. Did I get around to mentioning that (p. 40)?'", she excuses herself from the table and again walks toward the ladies' room. Franny's search for union meets with no understanding on Lane's part; she realizes that in order to continue her search, she must separate herself from him.

Franny's present crisis is sapping her sexual energy. In fact, her emotions have gained such influence over her that she neglects her biological functioning. She does not eat; she faints on her way to the washroom; she languishes on the couch, unable to sleep. There is

definite disunity between the sexual, the intellectual, and the affective within her, and the lack of unity is signified in her physical breakdown. To attain unity, Franny disregards what is explicitly sexual, and seeks to unite the intellectual and the affective.

Having discovered the Jesus Prayer, Franny is presently seeking union by this means. In her search she is conscious of the Sacred, but whether she consciously desires union with the Sacred is questionable. She tells Lane that the result of the Jesus Prayer, if said in the prescribed manner, is, "'You get to see God ... that's all (p. 39).'" She seems to realize that the Sacred is the highest good that can be attained, but she wants to attain it with minimal effort. She wants merely "to see God", that is, to grasp, through her own power, a desirable object. Union, as discussed in Chapter Three, requires a total capacity to give and a total openness to receive. Franny does not want to give; she has limited her receptivity to the Sacred to only one means--what seems to her to be a foolproof method: "'All you have to have in the beginning is quantity. Then, later on, it becomes quality by itself (p. 37).'" From the time Franny first begins to read The Way of the Pilgrim, until her final encounter with Zooey, she is probably going through the beginning stages of religious experience. She has a feeling of disgust with herself: "'I'm just sick of ego, ego, ego. My own and everybody else's (p. 29).'" This feeling is akin to a sense of sin, but is concerned not so much with her own personal alienation from the Sacred as with the nauseating sense of being part of a society in which something of ultimate importance is missing. Even while grasping at

the Jesus Prayer, she is aware of the egocentrism which is driving her; she is powerless within an egotistical trap: "'Don't you think I have sense enough to worry about my motives for saying the prayer?'" she says to Zooey, "'That's exactly what's bothering me so (p. 149).'" She realizes her powerlessness, and gropes for something transcendent, but she does not know what transcendence means in her life. Immediately after she tells Lane that the Jesus Prayer will help her "see God", she says, "'And don't ask me who or what God is. I mean I don't even know if he exists (p. 40).'"

Zooey attacks Franny's egocentrism, and in doing so gives her, so to speak, a crash course in "maturity". He points out that her attachment to the Jesus Prayer is simply a desire to escape a world which is dissatisfying to her: "'... you decide that ... the only intelligent thing for a girl to do is to lie around and shave her head and say the Jesus Prayer and beg God for a little mystical experience that'll make her nice and happy (p. 167).'" She is using this prayer, says Zooey, not as a help in life, but as a substitute for what she should be doing in life. He attacks the rigid and narcissistic attitude which prompts her to seek this escape. "'This is <u>God's</u> universe,'" he says, "'not yours (p. 167).'" He says that she does not try to understand Jesus in himself, but rather tries to fit Jesus into a framework that will somehow be satisfying to her. He claims that to understand Jesus is to understand that "'there <u>is</u> no separation from God ... that we're carrying the Kingdom of Heaven around with us, <u>inside</u> ... (p. 171).'" He is trying to persuade her that the union she seeks and cannot find

in the world around her, is not to be found by denying the world, nor can it be truly experienced by means of a spiritual gimmick. It is to be found in the realization that a true meeting with the Sacred can take place only in the depths of one's being, where one discovers one's emptiness and nothingness in the face of "the Kingdom of Heaven", or the Sacred. One understands this if one understands Jesus, and only when this understanding has come about can one approach union with the Sacred through the Jesus Prayer.

Zooey seemingly fails in this attempt to help Franny. She responds to his rhetoric by sobbing into the pillow. In a second attempt to communicate with Franny, Zooey points out that if she wants "the religious life", if she wants union with the Sacred, she must recognize the manifestations of the Sacred within her own life. She has sought the Sacred elsewhere, and thus is "'... missing out on every ... religious action that's going on around this house (p. 196).'" Their mother, genuinely concerned about Franny's health, has offered her a cup of chicken soup, which Franny has curtly refused. Zooey refers to the soup as "consecrated", because the love with which it is offered is an expression of the Sacred; in refusing it, Franny has refused to respond to the Sacred. He tells her that she can find union with the Sacred by seeing the Sacred in the commonplace things in her own life.

Franny responds to Zooey's final words with movements which betoken a certain inner peace and decisiveness. This suggests that the encounter with Zooey has perhaps been a religious experience for her. Zooey has shown her the Sacred in her life as clearly as possible, and

in spite of her obvious anguish, Franny has shown her desire for continued knowledge of the Sacred by hearing him out to the end. The result is a joy she has not experienced for many weeks.

Zooey has pointed out some of the faults and mistakes Franny is making in her search for union. If these are as clear to Franny as they are to the reader, then Franny is experiencing what can be described as a sense of her own sinfulness. Franny seems to realize that the dissatisfaction she feels with herself stems from a profound tendency within her to seek union through her own power, thus alienating herself from the Sacred. If she realizes the full import of Zooey's words, "'This is God's universe, not yours'", then she realizes the need to seek union not on her terms, but on the terms of the Sacred in her life.

Franny's religious upbringing has been essentially intellectual. By her own admission, she has been exposed to many different religious philosophies. Not until now, however, has she made an attempt to fully incorporate religion into her life. She has reached the stage where she desires to develop a personal value system, and the realization that she is unable to form religious values out of the various bits of religious knowledge she has acquired, results in an emotional breakdown. The combined circumstances of her age (she is close to adulthood), her obvious intelligence, her acquaintance with various religious philosophies, her desire for wisdom ("'knowledge should lead to wisdom, and if it doesn't, it's just a disgusting waste of time (p. 146)!'"), the awareness she has of her egocentric motives, and the complete absence of indoctrination which might otherwise have clouded her religious attitude, suggest that

Franny is ripe for the kind of sudden religious conversion which, according to Allport's criteria, will result from an intense religious experience and will lead to a definitive religious attitude. The disgust she feels with her egocentrism suggests a desire to become deeply concerned with other people--that is, her extreme sense of self-centeredness seems ripe for growth toward altruism and self-giving--but she lacks a point of reference towards which to change. Zooey offers her this point of reference: it is the little person, the unimportant person, the Fat Lady who sits "'on this porch all day, swatting flies ... (p. 200).'" It is every person, in fact, all of whom are "'Christ Himself (p. 202)'", the same Jesus Christ to whom Franny has been praying the Jesus Prayer. This is a profound theological concept, the significance of which Franny seems likely to have grasped to some degree.

Franny, then, appears to be a person who has experienced an adolescent religious conversion by means of the intensity of a single religious experience. The nature of her ensuing religious attitude is unknown, but it will probably be characterized by zealous altruism, gradually to be shaped and tempered by increased maturity and by the wisdom she claims to seek.

Holden (from The Catcher in the Rye)

Holden is a sixteen-year-old boy who has recently learned that he is to be expelled from his prep school because he does not "apply himself" and fails to reach the school's academic standards. He

decides to leave the school a few days before the Christmas holiday. He takes a train to New York, where his parents live, but he decides not to go home until his parents receive word from the headmaster of his explusion. The few lonely days that he spends wandering around New York are a sort of pilgrimage for him, a search for goodness, or meaning, or union with the Sacred.

Holden does not consider himself to be religious; he describes himself as "sort of an atheist (p. 99)." He has not been brought up within the context of organized religion, and his contact with church has been limited to religious services held at the schools he has attended. He dislikes the apparent artificiality he has seen in the ministers conducting these services: "... they all have these Holy Joe voices when they start giving their sermons.... They sound so phony when they talk (p. 100)." Holden is not openly rebellious against religion, because in effect, religion has remained on the periphery of his upbringing. He has been taught very few religious concepts, and those he has been taught have had little effect on the development of his personality. Hence, once his reasoning process becomes refined, he is able to perceive the reality of religion from a fresh, blank slate, as it were. However, Holden is still somewhat idealistic as well as emotionally immature; he perceives as phony the representatives of religion and other institutions (such as his school) which claim goodness, truth and justice as their goals. Holden searches for his own ideal, something or someone who will fulfill him. In other words, he is seeking a form of union which will satisfy his present need for the

Sacred and likewise be a means of securing a more mature, more profound union with the Sacred. He is both fearful and cynical of such union taking place with people whom he has contact with, as he knows by experience that they fall short of his exalted ideal. Therefore, he idealizes his dead brother, Allie, who symbolizes his concept of Sacred. Satisfying as this seems to Holden, his apparent relationship with Allie actually enhances his loneliness and increases his sense of alienation because it exists only as an illusion: he has quite correctly perceived the faults and inauthenticity in people around him, and realizes that these are elements which tend to increase the fragmentation within him rather than aid his search for union, but he has not yet discovered the source of union.

Holden seems to be somewhat aware of the presence of the Sacred and has a vague desire to seek the Sacred. In describing a particularly lonely period, after an unsuccessful encounter with a prostitute, he says, "I felt like praying or something ... but I couldn't do it (p. 99)." He does not yet fully acknowledge his own faults and weakness. He continually defends himself and his own position at the expense of others; egocentrically, he dwells on the faults of others, giving little consideration to his own.

Holden approaches religious experience in his encounter with his young sister Phoebe. Among the persons with whom he comes into contact, Phoebe is the embodiment of Holden's concept of Sacred. She is the only person Holden speaks of as liking him. "She likes me a lot. I mean she's quite fond of me (p. 156)." After unsuccessfully seeking to

alleviate his loneliness through various means--among them a prostitute, a former girlfriend, and the superficiality of a barroom--Holden finds himself alone and cold on a bench in Central Park. He begins to fantasize what might happen if he catches pneumonia and dies. This consideration brings Phoebe into his thoughts. She is the only one who would <u>really</u> be affected by his death, he reasons, because she is the only one who likes him. In this way, Holden becomes aware of Phoebe as a means of union. He sneaks into his parents' apartment and into Phoebe's bedroom to talk with her, in his continued search for union. His sense of failure and helplessness is acute at this point, and is intensified by Phoebe's accusation, after he has complained to her about his school, "'You don't like <u>anything</u> that's happening (p. 169).'" This accusation, coming from the one whom Holden considers to be the embodiment of goodness and beauty, is a shock to him. He has glimpsed the goodness of the Sacred in her and has seen in contrast some of his own failings, and thus grasps his distance from the Sacred. This experience is further intensified when Phoebe lies to their mother in order to save Holden from embarrassment, and when she offers him all the money she has been saving for Christmas presents. He starts to cry; this is very close to being a religious experience: he sees his own selfishness in the face of the goodness and purity of the Sacred, as embodied in Phoebe; he is utterly helpless and powerless, and realizes that the goodness personified in Phoebe is what he is searching for. He experiences a conversion, but not immediately; he leaves Phoebe shortly after this experience, only to find himself disillusioned and lonely again. Only when he returns to Phoebe

and makes a commitment to her (he promises her that he will return home rather than go out West, as he had planned to do) does he gain the peace of fulfillment. He reaches the end of his pilgrimage when he discovers the happiness of being with Phoebe.

Holden's conversion may be considered typical of the adolescent, when one considers the characteristics of adolescent conversion as described by Babin (1963): (1) Holden seeks happiness more than truth: "... what drives the adolescent to conversion is the urge to escape from a hopeless situation, the desire to be a success in life, rather than the challenge of objective truth (Babin, 1965, p. 61)." Holden often says, "if you want to know the truth ...", but it is not he who is searching for truth; what he wants is someone who will understand the truth about him, someone who will accept him and in whom he can find happiness. The person who fulfills this desire in him is Phoebe. After he has made his promise to Phoebe, he describes himself thus: "I was damn near bawling, I felt so damn happy ... (p. 213)." (2) Babin says that the adolescent desires to make secure "the foundations of the life that is opening up before him, clinging to a reality which is greater than he and which will give him security on his road into the future (p. 63)." The reality Holden has been seeking is the reality of purity and goodness in a world of sham that has seemingly engulfed him. He discovers this reality in Phoebe, and, for the present, it satisfies him. (3) Holden realizes that, having discovered "goodness" as embodied in Phoebe, he is required to make a choice between seeking further contact with it or turning away from it. (4) He makes a definite choice in favour of goodness (that

is, he decides to remain with Phoebe), and one can conjecture that this is a significant decision: in choosing goodness, Holden takes a step toward maturity. His alternative was an escape, which would have perpetuated his immaturity.

This is certainly not a mature religious experience, as Holden does not seem to be aware that his choice does in fact involve the Sacred. It probably <u>is</u> a religious experience in the sense that the goodness he sees in Phoebe is a manifestation of the Sacred, whether or not Holden realizes it as such, and therefore, his choice in favour of further contact with this goodness is a positive step toward union with the Sacred. The fact that Holden now experiences a happiness which has been hitherto unknown to him, suggests that he is now much closer to the reality of the Sacred than he was before. He has seen the Sacred within the limitations of his own experiences, and has made a positive response characterized by affectivity and egocentrism. It seems, therefore, that he has experienced a kind of religious experience correspondent with adolescence.

Holden's religious attitude is still undergoing formation. Religious beliefs have been given little priority in his upbringing; therefore, his religious attitude has not been formed by means of identification. Holden's values are clearly defined, however, and it appears that his religious attitude is presently being formed by the unifying effect of experiences which reveal the values which he idealizes. He values purity, goodness, and simplicity, and although his contact with them are transitory, he experiences these qualities sufficiently to

continue searching for the means by which he can incorporate them into his own life. There is a certain purity and simplicity in himself--perhaps this is why he values these qualities so highly--which is revealed in his attitude toward Jesus and his attitude toward the Disciples. He says, "... I'd bet a thousand bucks that Jesus never sent old Judas to Hell ... I think any one of the Disciples would've sent him to Hell and all--and fast, too--but I'll bet anything Jesus didn't do it (p. 100)."

This same attitude is expressed in a fantasy about himself: he sees himself standing on the edge of a cliff catching children in order to prevent them from falling over the cliff. He fantasizes himself as the ideal lover of humanity that he sees Jesus to be. Holden is aware of desirable qualities within himself--qualities which, it might be said, are necessary to a person in his search for union--and recognizing these same qualities in persons whom he admires, he reflects on their meaning and significance in his own life. His attitude, however, does not become formed to the point of definite commitment. The commitment he finally makes to Phoebe, although real for the moment, is certain to be broken again and again. If, in the future, he acquires a mature religious attitude, it will be the result of many religious experiences which have formed a unified core within him, so that not only will he be aware of the distinction between those experiences which bring him closer to the Sacred and those experiences which alienate him from the Sacred, but he will continually choose to orient himself toward the Sacred. This does not mean that he will never choose to alienate himself

from the Sacred, but that with maturity he will be more acutely aware of the ultimate consequences of his choices and that his general orientation will be toward the Sacred.

Like Alyosha in The Brothers Karamazov, Holden has undergone negative experiences in his sexual life, and therefore seeks union with the Sacred in sexual purity. Having spent much of his life in boarding schools, he is disgusted with the other students' preoccupation with sex. He lacks sexual prowess, as he readily admits to himself, and this fact depresses him, although his disgust stems also from a precocious realization that girls are more than merely sex objects. He pushes his disgust to an extreme, however, and seeks total purity. One of his symbols of purity is Jane, a girl he used to play checkers with, and he becomes upset when he discovers that his roommate who is "very sexy" has a date with her. He toys with the notion of joining a monastery. He becomes upset when he suspects Mr. Antolini, a former teacher whom he has liked and respected, of homosexuality. He tries to erase obscene graffiti from walls. He finds the epitome of purity in the seeming sexlessness of a child, Phoebe. Yet, intense as is his religious experience with Phoebe, his biological cravings get the better of him momentarily, and, in a fantasy, he dreams of going out West, where he will pretend he is a deaf mute and will marry a beautiful deaf-mute girl. This desire for sexual fusion requires as little self-giving as possible. He realizes that this is mere adolescent fantasy, because he is aware of both his sexual confusion and his search for goodness. Because he is as yet unable to blend sexuality and goodness within himself, he chooses

goodness in the end, and returns to the purity represented by Phoebe.

Holden has not yet reached an intellectual realization that the experiences of goodness and happiness which he cherishes are experiences of the Sacred, the source of the union he seeks. He has experiential knowledge of the difference between union and alienation, and as this knowledge becomes more clear to him, he tends increasingly to choose experiences leading to union. His religious attitude becomes more clearly defined in this direction, and possibly with maturity, he will become aware that the goodness he has been desiring and choosing is, in fact, union with the Sacred.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Summary

Man can be considered a religious being because of his capacity for awareness of his own transcendence. In himself, man is incomplete; his life is marked by a constant search for union and completion. It is precisely in the act of transcending himself and relating to the Sacred, who is at once the depth and ground of man's existence and a being of a wholly other order, that man finds ultimate union. Union is achieved in love, the source and perfection of which exists in the Sacred. Religion is the means by which man establishes his relationship with the Sacred. Religious experience is man's initiation into this relationship, and the religious attitude which man forms is his continued response to the Sacred.

This thesis has attempted to provide insight into some of the ways in which man relates to the Sacred during the adolescent stage of development, at the present period of Western society. An attempt has been made to show that during adolescence, as at every other stage of human development, man is dynamic, highly complex, and incapable of being totally categorized or structured. Although certain characteristic tendencies occur in the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of adolescents, these tendencies shift and change. Analysis of adolescent growth tendencies must acknowledge the individual person's subjective reality.

It is suggested that the characteristics of a particular stage

of development tend to reflect the means by which a person at that stage relates to the Sacred, and pursues union.

Several important characteristics of adolescence include a sharp increase in height and weight; maturity of sexual growth; awakened sex drive; increase in expended energy; and, increased ability to form abstract concepts. Adolescent emotional development is unable to keep pace with the accelerated physical changes; thus, a psychological imbalance occurs, and the adolescent enters into a period of narcissistic identity-seeking, manifested in part by an increased independence from parents, eagerness for friendship with peers, and a sense of alienation and loneliness. Due to this imbalance, psychological growth remains incomplete. Growth to maturity is gradual, and mature characteristics (marked mainly by an increase in other-centeredness and a corresponding decrease in self-centeredness) usually do not become evident until late adolescence or early adulthood. The adolescent's search for union and relationship with the Sacred are characteristically narcissistic and immature.

Early adolescent search for union is manifested in large part by desire for friendship and sexual drive. The motivation behind these means is characterized by a need to escape aloneness rather than by the desire for personal union: that is, the motivation is "negative" rather than "positive", characterized by a need to receive rather than a desire to give. Love is the essence of union; however, the capacity for love seems to exist only potentially during adolescence; only gradually does it actualize.

The adolescent's desire for friendship leads to concepts of the Sacred based on qualities he appreciates most in a friend: understanding, trust, compassion. Adolescent sexuality, being biologically-based, manifests a search for union that is biological, physical and concrete in nature; because adolescent sexuality is accompanied by an affective narcissism, the search for union follows the path of the idealized self: the adolescent tends to perceive the Sacred as the ideal person he himself would like to be.

Late adolescence is characterized, in large part, by an increase in intellectual growth which tends to lessen egocentrism and enlarge social awareness. Relationship with the Sacred at this time is interrelated with the adolescent's personal value system and becomes a matter of deliberate choice, less subjective and affective than at early adolescence.

This thesis has also attempted to explore the nature of adolescent religious experience and the means by which adolescents form religious attitudes. The essence of the religious experience is the need and desire for the Sacred. It consists of three interrelated elements: a sense of sin, which is the recognition of one's tendencies to alienate oneself from the Sacred; a sense of total helplessness and powerlessness; and conversion, which is a definitive choice in favour of the Sacred. As the adolescent grows into maturity, a sense of guilt gradually grows into a sense of sin. A sense of helplessness is acute during adolescence, due to increased realization of limitations. The adolescent is capable of a conversion that is characteristic of his immaturity; that

is, he turns to the Sacred in order to achieve his own happiness and goodness: his conversion is still, to a certain extent, self-centered.

The religious attitudes of the adolescent appear to be heavily influenced by outside forces which he perceives to be greater than himself. Foremost among these forces are the attitudes of his parents. Thus many of his religious attitudes, being second-hand, or indirect, lack genuine personal religious experience. It is also possible, however, for religious attitudes to be formed by the unifying effect of many religious experiences, by a conscious differentiation of religious experiences, or by the intensity of a single religious experience. The latter means of religious attitude formation imply that authentic religious experience has taken place in the adolescent's life.

Thus, the extent to which most adolescents have an authentic and conscious experience of the Sacred is open to question. There is little doubt, however, that they are capable of such experience.

The capacity for adolescent religious experience has been illustrated by analysis of three literary figures. All of these have an experience of the Sacred which is a turning point in their lives. For each of them, this experience is of a concrete, physical nature, stimulating their affectivity: for Alyosha, it is his mother's grave, the goodness he discovers in a prostitute, and the dead body of the elder Zossima; for Franny, it is a cup of soup and the "Fat Lady"; for Holden, it is his sister, Phoebe. The search for union which each undergoes reveals a characteristic immaturity: each of them attempts to escape--Alyosha, into a monastery; Franny, into a foolproof method

of prayer; and Holden, into the pure and simple world of childhood. The profundity of their conversion experiences varies. In Alyosha's case, the conversion of immaturity which sparks his entrance into the monastery and in which the realization of his sinfulness and need for the Sacred is still superficial, prepares him for his later conversion which is much more intense and profound. Franny's conversion is sudden and intense, and although the sense of peace she experiences suggests that the conversion is genuine, it is still only the first experience of its kind in her life, and whether it is profound enough to be lasting cannot be known. Holden's conversion is more immature than that of the other two. He probably is not entirely aware that he is seeking a relationship with the Sacred. His relationship with Phoebe and the conversion it brings about in him, has made the realization of the Sacred more accessible to him. Probably the conversions of Holden and Franny are an introduction into a relationship with the Sacred, to be followed in adulthood by mature conversions of a more lasting nature.

Hypotheses and Suggestions for Further Study

(1) The sudden, intense religious experience of Franny in Franny and Zooey, occurring to an adolescent of seemingly high intelligence, leads one to pose the possibility of a positive correlation between high IQ and the type of intense religious experience which leads to a sudden conversion. The lives of certain historical figures (for example, St. Augustine and St. Ignatius) also suggest this possibility.

(2) The search for union of all three characters analyzed in

Chapter Five involves sexual abstinence. This raises some interesting questions. Does the adolescent, largely incapable of integrating sexuality and love, tend to reach a stage where he temporarily rejects his sexuality in an attempt to find love? To what extent is the sexual abstinence of these three characters reflective of the sex-tabooed societies of their times? Do adolescents in our more permissive contemporary society also tend to abstain from sexual activities in their effort to achieve union? Is age a variable? (That is, does a late adolescent tend more toward sexual abstinence than an early adolescent?) What are the means which most contemporary adolescents use to cope with the lack of harmony between their sex drive and their desire for love?

(3) What is the relationship between religious knowledge and religious experience? Does an adolescent like Franny, who has been taught knowledge <u>about</u> religion have a greater propensity for religious experience than an adolescent who has been indoctrinated with religious beliefs? It would appear so, since the imposition of religious beliefs, being a vicarious and superficial experience of the Sacred, would seem to be an obstacle to authentic, first-hand religious experience.

(4) What are the implications of studies which show a positive relationship between religious attitudes and the religious climate of the home? Are religious attitudes the result of successful behavioural training, and therefore perhaps not the result of religious experience? Or is the religious climate such that beliefs are taught without being imposed, thus opening the possibilities for authentic religious experience to take place?

(5) To what extent is religious experience a community phenomenon and to what extent is it unique to the individual? Ritualistic worship of the Sacred in community appears to be a universal characteristic of religion. Yet there seems to be little doubt that ultimate religiosity concerns the relationship between the Sacred and each individual person.

This thesis has emphasized the latter phenomeon--that is, the relationship between the Sacred and the individual, in this case, the adolescent. The writer has taken the stance that, although certain observable phenomena allow conjecture about the adolescent's relationship with the Sacred, this relationship is ultimately a mystery. Vergote (1969) says:

> We must be constantly on our guard not to be misled by the mirage conjured up by psychological myths.... Once psychology has traced the curve of man's religious becoming from childhood to adulthood it has finished its task. It must now withdraw and leave man free to enter into communion with his God (p. 301).

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